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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Introduction

1. The President of the Executive Board opened the session. He noted that the Bureau had met three times since the first regular session on matters before the second regular session.

2. The Secretary of the Executive Board drew the attention of the Board to the annotated agenda contained in document DP/1997/L.2/Rev.1. She noted that the only addition to the documentation list contained in that document was the executive summary of the evaluation of national execution contained in document DP/1997/CRP.12, which was added as a result of discussions at the pre-session informal meeting. All the documentation for the session was available in languages except for the report of first regular session 1997, which was only available in English. The decisions adopted at the first session were contained in document DP/1997/11, which was available in all official languages. All conference room papers for the session were available in the three working languages, except for DP/1997/CRP. 9, which had not been issued by the time of the opening of the session. A revised work plan had been distributed. The Secretary noted that separate discussions on the country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) of Eritrea, India, Mauritania and Mongolia and the country programme for Albania had been requested by at least five members of the Board. The CCFs and the UNFPA country programmes for Eritrea and India would be considered in a joint UNDP/UNFPA segment.

3. The Secretary announced that there would be informal briefings on United Nations system coordination in India with representatives of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF, on the UNDP MicroStart programme, and with the UNFPA country representatives in Eritrea and Senegal. Informal consultations on UNDP change management (UNDP 2001) and with the UNFPA country representative in Albania would also be held. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that UNDP Resident Representatives for India and Mauritania, and UNFPA country representatives in Albania, Eritrea, India, and Senegal would attend the session. She noted that several background papers on various subjects were available in the room.

4. The Executive Board approved the provisional agenda as contained in DP/1997/L.2/Rev.1:

Item 1. Organizational matters

UNDP segment

Item 2. Country cooperation frameworks and related matters
Item 3. United Nations Capital Development Fund
Item 4. Financial, budgetary and administrative matters

UNFPA segment

Item 5. Country programmes and related matters
Item 6. Other matters

5. The Executive Board agreed to the revised work plan as distributed by the Secretariat.

6. The Executive Board agreed to postpone consideration of the report of the first regular session 1997 (DP/1997/6) to the annual session 1997.

7. The draft agenda for the annual session 1997, contained in document DP/1997/L.3, was distributed. The Secretary informed the Executive Board that the pre-session informal for the annual session would be held on 28 April. She noted that the overview decision included the schedule for future sessions of the Board. In 1998, the Board had indicated its preference to hold the annual session in June, rather than in May. That would entail issuing the report to the Economic and Social Council at an earlier session than the annual session.

8. The President informed the Executive Board that an informal discussion on national execution was planned for 16 May.

9. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its work during the current session on a number of key issues. He anticipated a fruitful discussion on the annual report and change management proposals at the annual session. A special event on poverty eradication, which would look at success stories, the causes of poverty, as well as the role of the United Nations, would be an additional element at the annual session. It was hoped that the event would attract high-level participation from capitals.

10. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) of UNFPA (Policy and Administration) thanked the Executive Board for its guidance during the session, particularly with reference to the country programmes presented. He extended thanks to all who had been involved in the organization of the session.

11. One delegation noted that a draft decision which it had circulated had been withdrawn. The President thanked all concerned, including the Bureau for its support and the Executive Board members and observers.

UNDP SEGMENT

Statement by Administrator

12. The Administrator welcomed the Executive Board and gave an overview of the subjects that would be taken up during the session. He briefed the Board on the status of programme delivery, noting that 1996 indicative planning figure (IPF) delivery was currently estimated at $480 million, or 10 per cent more than in 1995. The 1997 delivery forecast for country and regional programmes stood at $570 million, which implied that some $780 million in 1997 budgets would be

approved prior to July. As at the end of February 1997, approvals had reached a level of $406 million, or 52 per cent of the amount required. The Special Delivery Task Force met every second week under the chairmanship of the Associate Administrator and closely monitored the prospects for accelerated programme build-up. The $2 million allocated from the contingency fund for a special delivery support facility had already been released, with $1.5 million of it approved. Another oral report would be given at the annual session and a comprehensive written report on 1997 to 1999 programme delivery would be submitted at the third regular session 1997.

13. The Administrator gave an overview of the change management process in UNDP, which would be considered in detail at the informal consultation during the session. An advance copy of the document on change management to be issued at the annual session 1997 was distributed to the Executive Board to enable members to consult with their capitals at an early stage. An informal note on the proposed organizational structure and functions was circulated. Additional conference room papers would be provided. He underlined the linkage between change management and the new budget strategy, which would be taken up by the Board during the current session.

14. With regard to overall United Nations reform, the Administrator briefed the Executive Board on the first meeting of the Development Operations Group, one of four sectoral groups created by the Secretary-General since entering office. The Executive Committee of the Development Operations Group was composed of all United Nations funds and programmes active in development operations. The terms of reference for the committee had been made available to the Board. The Administrator noted that his role as convener of the Development Operations Group replaced his earlier assignment as Special Coordinator for Economic and Social Affairs. The new committee would promote complementarity, cohesion, and collaboration, with the overall goal of providing programme countries with enhanced development cooperation. The Office of United Nations Support and Services (OUNS) would continue to provide operational support to the resident coordinator system and serve as secretariat for the Development Operations Group. It was anticipated that secondments from other United Nations entities to OUNS would take place.

15. The Administrator briefed the Executive Board on his press conference of 7 March on the Reserve for Field Accommodation. A oral progress report would be given later in the session (see "Other matters").

16. A review of recent activities followed, which included references to the UNDP role in the Microcredit Summit, held on 4 February in Washington, D. C., gender-mainstreaming initiatives within the organization, and a policy analysis study on energy after Rio, a contribution by UNDP to the Special Session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the Earth Summit. He noted other recent UNDP activities in disaster relief and in assistance to post-conflict countries. A series of "town hall" meetings had been launched in the United States with the intention of familiarizing United States citizens with the challenges of African development in particular and the work of the United Nations in general. The Human Development Report 1997, the focus of which was poverty, would be launched in Germany and South Africa jointly on 12 June. He acknowledged and thanked the delegation of the United Kingdom for its contribution of $100,000 to

strengthening the editorial and other functions of the Executive Board Secretariat.

17. Several speakers thanked the Administrator for his comprehensive statement. One delegation requested further information on the Executive Committee of the Development Operations Group, including how its work related to that of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP). Other questions posed related to clarification of the delivery situation, secondments to OUNS and the change management process, in particular the "focus within the focus" of UNDP. One speaker sought more disaggregated information data on delivery, in particular in least developed countries. Programme countries must be actively involved in the consultations on change management.

18. The Administrator was encouraged to continue to pursue the measures described with regard to the Reserve for Field Accommodation. The work to promote gender mainstreaming in UNDP was welcomed. It was suggested that UNDP replicate the town hall meetings mentioned by the Administrator in more countries.

19. One delegation stated that UNDP was leading the reform process of the development system. Efforts to streamline UNDP, and to create a more transparent and responsive organization, were welcomed. Another delegation invited the Administrator and other senior officials to participate in the International Development Seminar to be held in Tokyo in October 1997.

20. In response to the query raised, the Administrator stated that the Development Operations Group had discussed the role of JCGP and was looking into the possibility of merging the two entities. Only the International Fund for Agricultural Development did not belong to the Development Operations Group. He stressed that a new round of meetings should not be created, and the mandates of JCGP must be fulfilled. The principal effort was strengthening the cohesion and collaboration at the country level. Many issues emanated from other inter-agency processes, including the follow-up to conferences, promotion of the Special Initiative on Africa, strengthening development cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, collaboration with civil society organizations, strengthening of the resident coordinator system, and, in particular with regard to JCGP members, the mandates for harmonization, including among programming cycles. A more joint approach at the country level was being discussed. While no formal decision had been taken, he noted that UNICEF had indicated that it would second a staff member to OUNS. There was at present no formal reporting mechanism on the work of the Development Operations Group to the Executive Board.

21. With reference to the change management process, a conference room paper on the "focus within the focus" would be available in April. The real focus must occur at the country level, with more clarity needed on the services UNDP could provide most effectively. The services would be within the mandate of sustainable human development approved by the Board, with poverty eradication as the overriding aim.

22. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that the 1997 core programme delivery figures mentioned by the Administrator related only to

TRAC 1 and 2 and the regional programmes. If TRAC 3 and other programme and programme-related lines of the financial framework were included, the delivery estimate would be close to $766 million. IPF carry-over entitlements from the previous cycle, which stood at about $500 million, needed to be met during the current programming period. The current resource projection was less than the $3.3 billion targeted in decision 95/23. Delivery was projected to rise from $766 million to about $835 million in 1998 and then to almost $900 million in 1999. Thus, by the end of the period, the balance of liquid reserves should be minimal. Expenditure targets for 1997 for country resources (i.e., TRAC 1 and 2 and IPF carry-over) were currently set at $578 million. Of that, $277 million pertained to expenditure expected in Africa (representing 74 per cent of the peak budget target for the region; $182 million for Asia (representing 70 per cent of the peak budget target for the region); $41 million for Arab States; $42 million for Latin America and the Caribbean; and about $35 million for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

II. COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

A. Regional and country cooperation frameworks

1. Africa

First regional cooperation framework for Africa

23. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the regional cooperation framework for Africa (DP/RCF/RBA/1). A supplementary note had been made available to the Executive Board. The note responded to comments made at an informal meeting held on 26 February.

24. The President underlined the importance of benchmarks and indicators referred to in the supplementary paper.

25. One delegation, on behalf of the African Group, noted that the process of arriving at the regional cooperation frameworks was elaborate and allowed for the Executive Board to have oversight. The speaker noted that while country cooperation frameworks had a clear constituency and were in many cases assisted by the country strategy notes, the regional cooperation frameworks needed to take account of the often diverse needs of an entire region. Following the informal meeting on 26 February, further reviews of the text had taken place. While some parts of the framework could be supported there was a need for a more comprehensive approach, especially with regard to the inclusion of "best practices". The regional framework should be derived from principles similar to those governing the CCFs. Regional ownership should be emphasized in support of regional cooperation initiatives. The diversity within regions must be considered, and thus place emphasis on subregional activities and regional execution, including the involvement of Governments and regional institutions. Other partners could participate as appropriate. The programme approach should be incorporated in the regional framework. The framework should emphasize

monitoring and impact. The regional commissions could play a leading role at the macro-level. A serious attempt should be made to optimize resources, with concentration on activities of a truly regional or subregional activity receiving funding priority. A macro-evaluation could be beneficial. The African Group supported the issuance of an annual progress report and a review at the end of the cycle. Poverty eradication should be the overriding emphasis of the framework.

26. Another delegation expressed support for the previous statement. The speaker supported the four focus areas of the framework and the participatory approach.

27. One speaker stated that the development priorities in the framework were those of African governments. He welcomed the efforts of UNDP in the area to work with regional institutions in Africa and expressed the hope that the necessary resources would be available from both core and non-core sources. The targeted amount of $293 million appeared insufficient for the period 1997-2001.

28. Some speakers, while expressing support for the matrix in the document, noted that industrialization was missing.

29. One delegation, also on behalf of another, stated that the time frames for regional programmes should be uniform. The supplementary information helped to understand the regional cooperation framework, as the original document needed more elaboration. Regional programmes must complement country programmes, show value added, and demonstrate linkage with the programmes of bilateral donors and with national planning cycles. The delegation queried the portion of the budget earmarked for TCDC and for evaluation activities.

30. Other delegations also called for improvement in the regional cooperation framework, noting that the original documentation should have included the supplementary information in order to obtain a more thorough briefing from their capitals. The areas in which UNDP had a comparative advantage should be highlighted, such as governance. The concerns of donors must be taken into account in order for financial support to continue. One delegation underlined the importance of the regional cooperation framework to the Meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development (TICAD II) process.

31. The Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed full support for the regional cooperation framework. The regional framework supplemented national development efforts. Donors should ensure that more resources were devoted to the regional programme or its goals would not be attained. One of the key elements was the use of TCDC as an instrument for programme implementation. He also expressed the support of the Group of 77 and of China for the first cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries (DP/CF/TCDC/1), which would be taken up in a separate discussion.

32. One delegation noted that the framework covered sub-Saharan Africa, yet the supplementary note referred to the Nile Basin Project, in which Egypt and Sudan were participating. The speaker also queried how UNDP would coordinate the regional programme with the activities of the United Nations New Agenda for

the Development of Africa and the United Nations System-Wide Initiative on Africa. More information on cooperation between UNDP and the Organization of African Unity, particularly in conflict prevention, was also sought.

33. The Assistant Administrator noted that the document contained a framework and that operational details would emerge as specific programmes were developed. The programme included areas identified in the SHD framework, were demand-driven, and included the participation of regional institutions and implementation by agencies. Regional institutions would be used as a link with national institutions. Interventions in the area of peace and security were included in the governance programme, which was linked to the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. The Regional Bureau for Africa participated in joint activities with the Regional Bureau for Arab States. The figure of $91 million contained in document DP/RCF/RBA/1 was an allocation for three years of a five-year programme.

34. One delegation noted that the goals and principles of the framework were appropriate, in particular governance and support to the private sector. The comparative advantage of supporting activities at the regional level versus at the national level must be examined. Clarification was sought on the use of funding from the Global Environment Facility and the Montreal Protocol fund.

35. Another speaker underlined the need for the Executive Board to provide guidance on the format and contents of the documentation for regional cooperation frameworks. It was essential that the results of evaluations be included and highlighted in the regional programmes. He cited the results of the mid-term review of the African regional programme, which had warned against underbudgeting, stressed the need to include lessons learned and suggested limitation of themes in regional programmes. The supplementary note addressed some of those concerns, yet more explicit information was needed.

36. One delegation emphasized the need for sustainability in the activities in the programme. Some elements extended beyond the niche of UNDP. Ownership by Governments must be assured. The speaker requested information on which countries were involved in the regional programme. Some delegations underlined the need to demonstrate concrete linkage with poverty eradication and a key role of gender issues in the programme.

37. The need for the regional programme to be beneficiary driven was underlined by one delegation. Further resource mobilization was required.

38. The Assistant Administrator commented that the previous system of the project approach had led UNDP to respond to a wide variety of requests from regional and subregional organizations. Greater details on programmes, benchmarks and targets would be included in the following year's report to the Executive Board, which would be based on an enhanced consultative process. The programme would emphasize areas where UNDP had a comparative advantage. The matrix included in the framework document was illustrative at the present time. In response to a query, she noted that the knowledge network facility was designed to promote access to a network of professionals and specialists involved in the region. Best practices and the results of evaluations would be taken into account in forming new programmes. Joint meetings were held with the

Regional Bureau for Arab States on the subject of the Nile River Basin. She underlined that programmes were demand-driven, UNDP did work with recipients and in areas where it had a comparative advantage. The RBA newsletter was available in French.

Country cooperation frameworks for Africa

39. The President informed the Executive Board that five written requests had been received for consideration of the CCFs for Eritrea and Mauritania. The CCF for Eritrea would be taken up in the joint segment of UNDP and UNFPA (see chapter VI).

40. The Assistant Administrator introduced the first country cooperation frameworks for the Africa region.

41. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation frameworks for Ethiopia (DP/CCF/ETH/1), Namibia (DP/CCF/NAM/1), and Uganda (DP/CCF/UGA/1) and took note of the extension of the sixth country programme for Kenya (DP/CP/KEN/6/EXTENSION I).

First country cooperation framework for Mauritania

42. The Assistant Administrator introduced the first country cooperation framework for Mauritania (DP/CCF/MAU/1).

43. One delegation expressed support for the themes of the framework. Support to governance was a priority, in particular with regard to the inclusion of civil society and support to decentralization. The question that gender issues were not explicitly referred to in the document was raised. Clarification was sought on the reference to fishing agreements with the European Union. Further information on how UNDP would strengthen Mauritanian competence in national execution was sought.

44. Another delegation expressed its concern that the programme was quite broad, although the priority areas were well chosen. The impact of the programme could be enhanced if the priorities included a smaller number of subsectors. Clarification was sought of the link between the CCF and the regional cooperation framework for Africa. One delegation queried how the country office would mobilize funding in the context of the regional cooperation framework. In particular, clarification was sought on the role of UNDP headquarters units in assisting Mauritania to access funds or mobilize them for pilot projects.

45. In addressing the queries raised by delegations, and the clarification sought by them, the Resident Representative in Mauritania informed the Executive Board of the process that had led to the formulation of the first CCF for Mauritania. He emphasized the dialogue and consultation established with the national authorities, the donor community, civil society, and the private sector, who had all participated actively in the different stages of the preparation of the advisory note. The full support by all partners of the three areas of concentration had led to the formulation of the CCF. The comments of the local approval committee had confirmed the relevance of the focus areas to

national objectives. The document drew on priorities defined in the country strategy note and the operationalization of SHD through its prospective outputs: the national framework on SHD, the Observation Centre on SHD, the National Report on SHD, and the National Strategy on SHD.

46. With reference to the comment that gender was not included in the document, the Resident Representative highlighted the ongoing activities that targeted women through an operational subgroup on the promotion of cooperative associations for women, complementing the work of other donors in the advancement of women. To ensure that women participated in all programmes, gender was viewed in the CCF as a cross-cutting theme to be taken into account in all three areas of concentration. With regard to the query regarding fishing agreements with the European Union, he explained that the fishing industry played a major role in the Mauritanian economy in the post-adjustment period. The Resident Representative explained that there would be selection of catalytic programmes with the areas of concentration in the CCF. With regard to national execution, he emphasized the role of ownership, the role to be played by the national authorities, and explained the coordination and implementation mechanism established to support the national execution modality. That mechanism included a steering committee for programming, a coordination unit, a workshop on national execution, an annual audit, and the use of implementing agencies to support the modality.

47. The Resident Representative noted that the country had not been very involved in regional cooperation in the past. Now, however, he could confirm the convergence of the areas of concentration chosen in the CCF and the ones elaborated in the regional framework. Complementarity and inclusion of gender linkage would be sought. For funding of pilot projects, he confirmed the recourse to funds administered by the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, and especially funds for the Poverty Strategy Initiative for the programmes in poverty eradication. In response to a query raised, he noted that there had been a positive evaluation of the electrification project funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by a non-governmental organization, and close consultation with the Caisse Francaise de développement to capitalize and expand on the wind energy project.

48. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Mauritania (DP/CCF/MAU/1).

2. Asia and the Pacific

First regional cooperation framework for Asia and the Pacific

49. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific introduced the first regional cooperation framework for Asia and the Pacific (DP/RCF/RAP/1).

50. One delegation, on behalf of the Asia and Pacific Group, stated that the consultative process leading up to the regional framework with Governments and regional organizations had been very useful. The thematic areas contained in the framework corresponded closely to national policies. Clarification was sought on the reference in the document regarding the activities of countries in

the environment area. The speaker underlined the efforts of countries in the region to protect the environment and thus, national efforts should thus be included. More technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) was encouraged. It was requested that paragraph 34 include references to sub-regional cooperation. He also noted that the issue of sustainability did not appear in the document. Knowledge available in the region should be fully maximized and the sense of ownership by the region enhanced.

51. Another delegation thanked UNDP for the supplementary information provided. The speaker requested information on the goals of UNDP in the regional framework. The themes in the framework closely matched UNDP priority areas. However, goals and targets could be better elaborated to increase the ability to assess the framework in the future. More information on the comparative advantage of UNDP in the region was sought, as was the indication that UNDP would provide poverty and human development indicators. The speaker emphasized that much information on indicators already existed. Information on resource allocation should have been included in the framework.

52. Another speaker emphasized that his Government intended to cooperate with several of the regional activities elaborated in the document.

53. Several speakers praised the framework as demonstrating cooperation within the region. Effective use of the TCDC modality would be most welcome. One speaker requested more information on interventions by UNDP within the regional programme on natural disaster-preparedness and on the feasibility of applying national execution in the programme.

54. Another delegation sought information regarding the comparative advantage of UNDP in certain programme areas such as the environment and international trade and investment since many organizations were active in those fields. Clarification on the reference to "strategic labour force planning" was also sought. The Assistant Administrator responded to the queries raised by the speakers. He noted that UNDP was very aware of the efforts of Asian and Pacific countries in the field of environment. He hoped that through the regional programme, TCDC would increase through information and experience-sharing. It was hoped that eventually all countries would be able to enhance information-sharing through Internet technology. Links between sub regional organizations were being examined. Sustainability was a key factor and would be ensured. UNDP worked closely with intergovernmental mechanisms in the region as a means of ensuring sustainability. A good example of successful regional programmes were the Mekong River and Tumen River programmes, which entailed cooperation among several countries in each. UNDP had no intention of replicating indicators developed by others. He was pleased that the Government of Japan would increase its cooperation with the Mekong programme in collaboration with UNDP. With regard to disaster management, he noted that it was the decision of the countries on whether to involve UNDP. A proper niche for UNDP work in trade and investment had been worked out. The reference in paragraph 25 was to maximizing of human resources. He emphasized the importance of the roles of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations in the regional framework. National execution was used widely in the region.

55. One delegation raised several queries about references in the framework,

including one in paragraph 17 to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the New Initiatives Programme referred to in paragraph 36, and the sustainability of transboundary issues and their link with TCDC. The speaker hoped there would be a renewed commitment to regional cooperation and the active involvement of programmes with SAARC.

56. Another delegation stated that the cooperation framework was part of a broader agenda of in-country cooperation. Referring to paragraph 17, he underlined the usefulness of intercountry cooperation and suggested that there be a similar initiative with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). He underlined the importance for many countries in the region of natural disaster reduction and disaster management, and work with refugees and displaced persons with a view to development, the region, for which UNDP contributions were very useful.

57. One speaker underlined the role of the Tumen River development project in harmonizing and reducing customs barriers and promoting investments. His Government had contributed $1 million to that project. It later set up a $250,000 trust fund for cooperation in the region.

58. One representative stated that the cooperation framework was a good effort although general in nature, (e.g. the wording on the design of policies). His Government would wish to receive the annual reviews referred to in the document, in particular those elaborating on regional and sub-regional aspects. One speaker called for more information on activities in the Pacific subregion, including those relating to natural disasters. UNDP was commended for cooperation with the Pacific subregional bodies, including its offer to assist with building capacity of the APEC regional centre for the Pacific in Papua New Guinea.

59. One representative stated that more analysis and integration of information on the causes of poverty should have been reflected in the framework. The document should refer to "optimal" use rather than "efficient" use of resources. It was recommended that the Bretton Woods institutions and Asian Development Bank be included in the framework. Another speaker noted the useful areas of cooperation elaborated in the framework, in particular in its incorporation of positive experiences accumulated in previous programmes on the development of subregional cooperation.

60. The Assistant Administrator noted that the references indicated by one delegation on names of subregional organizations referred to in the document were typographical errors and would be corrected. The New Initiatives programme was intended to work with and help countries as well as regional and subregional entities. UNDP was cognizant of the political sensitivity of transboundary activities and would ensure that any programme undertaken be at the request, invitation and in partnership with Governments. UNDP would consult with the SAARC Secretariat on South Asian sub-regional activities. The Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and UNDP would enable strengthened cooperation. He noted that the reference by the Republic of Korea to its contribution included in the resource mobilization table would be amended to include the latest contribution. In response to another query, he noted that programmes in enabling economic environment and public policy were meant to support key government

policies. Copies of annual reviews would be distributed. He informed the Executive Board that the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific was providing technical assistance and seed money to Asian and Pacific countries for the preparation of national human development reports. Gender advisers in the field would enable increased mainstreaming of gender issues. The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank would be kept fully informed of the activities of the regional programme.

61. The Executive Board approved the regional cooperation framework for Asia and the Pacific (DP/RCF/RAP/1).

Country cooperation frameworks for Asia and Pacific region

62. In accordance with the arrangements made by the secretariat, the first country cooperation framework for India was considered in the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment (see chapter VI).

First country cooperation framework for Papua New Guinea

63. One delegation welcomed the first country cooperation framework for Papua New Guinea (DP/CCF/PNG/1), in particular the sound collaborative approach on which it was based. Noting that the Government of this country, Australia, was a major donor of bilateral assistance to Papua New Guinea, the representative sought clarification on the following areas of the UNDP programme: the level of UNDP staff anticipated, past efforts at cost-sharing, and in particular, UNDP activities in Bougainville. With regard to the latter, the representative sought more information on UNDP plans for a meeting to raise additional funds for the construction and rehabilitation of Bougainville, for which $1.2 million was already planned in the first CCF. Seeking information on who would be invited to participate in the meeting and on which donors had previously made firm funding commitments, the representative noted that Australia had provided programme aid for Bougainville since 1991; experience suggested that in order to support effectively a peace process, any major reconstruction programme for Bougainville should be coordinated through, or with the close collaboration of, relevant local-level authorities. He welcomed the opportunity to coordinate his country's efforts with those of UNDP and others in Papua New Guinea.

64. The representative of Papua New Guinea commended the Resident Representative in Papua New Guinea for his work and endorsed the collaborative effort of UNDP in setting up the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation centre in the country. He also recognized UNDP work in microcredits for women. Clarification was sought on the reference in paragraph 14 of document DP/CCF/PNG/1 to the UNDP role in aid coordination, policy development and planning, which he stressed were in the exclusive domain of the Government. Programmes must be clarified with the Government before they were implemented, particularly those in Bougainville. UNDP assistance should be undertaken within the policy directives and framework acceptable to the Government of Papua New Guinea as the legitimate governing authority. The representative also raised concern about paragraph 39 of the document with reference to the Government request regarding resource mobilization for activities in Bougainville. He emphasized that any funding for that purpose should be channelled through the Government.

65. The Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Lao stated that the first country cooperation framework (DP/CCF/LAO/1) was fully in line with his country's national development plan. The focus area of environment was particularly important. The Lao People's Democratic Republic remained a least developed country despite economic growth of 6.4 per cent in 1996. Natural disasters had caused lasting consequences. The UNDP programme would help to strengthen the capacity of his country to plan and implement projects.

66. One delegation, in referring to the case-by-case project report on Afghanistan (DP/1997/7) expressed full support to UNDP for its work in that country. The speaker hoped that coordination problems in Afghanistan had been resolved.

67. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau of Asia and the Pacific informed the Executive Board that, with reference to the first CCF for Papua New Guinea, the staffing level would be according to that approved in the budget strategy. Any additional posts would be funded through non-core resources for project implementation. He assured the representative of Papua New Guinea that UNDP implemented projects in the country only at the request of the Government.

68. The Resident Representative in Papua New Guinea, in response to the query raised, noted that the $6 million in Government cost-sharing represented a small decrease as compared with the past three years and no increase was expected. He recognized the generous support of the Government of Australia in cost-sharing in Papua New Guinea. He noted that UNDP worked strictly within the Government policy framework with regard to Bougainville. A conference on Bougainville would not be convened until the situation there allowed commencement of rehabilitation and restoration. Support from donors had not yet been solicited. One donor had indicated support for such a conference, and two others had indicated so informally.

69. The Assistant Administrator noted that UNDP had followed the recommendations of the Ashgabad meeting very closely with regard to coordination of assistance in Afghanistan. The Administrator planned to appoint a new Resident Representative in Afghanistan and it was hoped that coordination within the United Nations system would improve.

70. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation frameworks for Bhutan (DP/CCF/BHU/1), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/CCF/LAO/1), and Papua New Guinea (DP/CCF/PNG/1) and took note of the case-by-case project report on Afghanistan (DP/1997/7).

First country cooperation framework for Mongolia (DP/CCF/MON/1)

71. One delegation expressed its support to the programme and for the first country cooperation framework document (DP/CCF/MON/1), as it identified problems and bottlenecks in an open and precise manner. The focus areas were well chosen and the priority to development coordination welcomed.

72. Another delegation supported the active involvement of UNDP in Mongolia. Clarification was sought about UNDP work in promoting local governance, given Mongolia's sparse population and on the sustainability of poverty alleviation interventions through the use of United Nations Volunteers (UNV) specialists. His Government would collaborate with UNDP in Mongolia through multi-bi funding and a human development cooperation fund.

73. The Permanent Representative of Mongolia elaborated the elements of the first CCF. He emphasized the significant role of UNDP in management development and aid coordination. He noted the recent onset of poverty in Mongolia, which had become a major social issue in the 1990s. His Government hoped to reduce poverty levels, which had risen to 36 per cent in recent years, to 10 per cent. The main priorities of the national poverty action plan were growth and employment promotion, strengthening of social safety nets, focus on gender, and increased grass-roots involvement.

74. The former Resident Representative in Mongolia noted that the strengthening of local governments was not easy. That was undertaken under the programme approach, within the Management Development Programme. The poverty eradication programme was aimed at employment creation at the local level and had been set up to be sustainable. Coordination was aided in Mongolia by the relatively few organizations that were represented there. UNDP tried to serve as a service centre to all donors in Mongolia. Some agencies contributed to local office costs because of the successful coordination. The resource mobilization target might be too ambitious but if one looked at the fifth programming cycle, one could see that a $3 million programme had ultimately resulted in a $60 million programme. The regional programme had benefited Mongolia through the participation of Government officials in regional forums.

75. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Mongolia (DP/CCF/MON/1).

3. Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

First regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

76. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) introduced the first regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (DP/RCF/REC/1).

77. Many delegations expressed their support for the regional framework. The framework was closely linked with national programmes and goals and had been prepared in close collaboration with countries in the region. The use of national execution and innovative modalities for cooperation were positive features of the framework. Funding under the regional programme would support and complement funding for national activities approved in country cooperation frameworks (CCFs). One speaker pointed out that the work of UNDP in the region complemented the efforts of other donors.

78. Speakers highlighted UNDP work in fostering economies in transition through assistance to the strengthening of the financial services sector, development of democratic institutions, production of national human development reports, and activities described in paragraph 30 of document DP/RCF/REC/1 on sustainable livelihoods. Gender mainstreaming and cooperation with UNIFEM was supported. Several speakers cited the inclusion of technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) as a positive feature of the framework. The regional umbrella project, AGORA, provided flexibility and a means to provide financing to additional needs. That was especially useful since as the regional programme was limited in resources. One speaker noted that the framework did not include references to coordination and cooperation with other donors, including international financial institutions. Information was also sought on resource allocations, evaluation, and an explanation of the $11 million target in non-core funding. One delegation noted the high absorptive capacity for funding and underlined the usefulness of seed capital to attract additional funding.

79. One speaker requested written information on the experience of integrated offices within RBEC. Another sought clarification about the role of UNDP in assisting countries in joining the European Union and the Organization of Economic Cooperation for Development.

80. One speaker referred to the RBEC initiative to set up a regional support office in Bratislava. UNDP support was helpful in paving the way for those countries in the region that who were "emerging donors". UNDP also helped countries without UNDP offices, which were self-financed through the government contribution to local office costs mechanism. One delegation noted that it participated in UNDP programmes though a national unit staffed by one professional.

81. Some delegations underlined the need to balance economic interventions with social interventions in the region, including through support to civil society and advocacy groups.

82. Several delegations emphasized the need for equal treatment and conditions in RBEC in line with those of other regional bureaux in UNDP, including the level and number of posts in country offices. In that context, the issue of harmonization between allocated core programme resources and the number of core staff of country offices was raised. Several delegations requested the secretariat to submit a conference room paper at the annual session 1997 that would contain comparative statistical data on the subject for each country office and each headquarters unit. One delegation requested distribution of the organizational chart of UNDP at the annual session, which would show the results of the change management process and its impact, unit by unit, including level of staffing.

83. The Assistant Administrator stated that he regretted not being able to respond to all the queries that would be raised, as he was obliged to leave New York on that evening. In his response to the points raised, he stated that his written statement included a resources allocation table by programme theme. Coordination with donors had taken place, within each project, through tripartite meetings. Evaluation was built into the framework and referred to in

his written statement. Non-core funding for the regional programme was modest, as was funding from core. It was hoped that non-core resources would be mobilized at the country level. The focus of the regional framework was on poverty eradication, governance, and sustainable livelihoods. RBEC had been identified as the region with the biggest impact in its regional programme, for example in the area of gender. The experience of UNDP with integrated offices had been useful in that it demonstrated that the concept was useful but in practice did not work. For example, it was learned that United Nations Resident Coordinator could not undertake certain activities since they were not authorized to approve funding while the UNDP representative who served as United Nations deputy representative could, as least as far as UNDP allocated resources were concerned. It was hoped that resources could be channelled from the global programme to the regional programme.

84. One delegation suggested that the programme should also include activities on HIV/AIDS, and had specific comments to make on the regional project "External Resources Management". The implementation process needed improvement, with results of needs assessment missions reacted to promptly and financial arrangements clarified. Unexpected changes owing to decisions taken at UNDP headquarters should be discussed with major donors.

85. The Assistant Administrator responded by giving an overview of the project's achievements and of the discussions he had held with officials of the Austrian Chancellery. He stated that the problems had resulted from differing assessments of the results of the project, which had not been appropriately conveyed to the senior managers of the various organizations to make them to take corrective measures. He was pleased to report that agreement had been reached with the Austrian authorities on follow-up actions regarding the future of that project.

86. One delegation underlined the need to increase staff in country offices in the RBEC region. In expressing particular support for the AGORA project, the speaker thanked RBEC for its assistance in preparing a conference on sustainable development in April 1997 in Belarus with the cooperation of other organizations of the United Nations system as well as with the Governments of Austria and Denmark. The results would enable the strengthening of internal systems and integration into Europe, as well as support sustainable development efforts and serve as an input to the General Assembly at its special session on the review of Agenda 21.

87. One speaker praised the ability of RBEC to undertake so much with minimal resources, a policy his delegation would like to see pursued in the future in UNDP. His delegation supported the current staffing arrangements in RBEC, where the factor of a small number could well have been the decisive one in contributing to the success of the Regional Bureau. He requested information on the priorities of the programme since it was very ambitious. Queries were raised on the use of NGOs in the region and whether the G-7 project in Moscow would be used as a reference for the activities on the management of external resources in the Commonwealth of Independent States. With regard to the environment, there was a discrepancy between the amount allocated and the description of the projects. The speaker also requested information on the

linkage between the themes of the Human Development Report and the National Human Development Reports.

88. Another speaker stated that the RBEC-proposed networking was the way of the future and that national projects that shared regional thematic activities would be built on. One delegation noted that some activities had been discontinued as they fell under the mandate of other institutions.

89. The Deputy Director of RBEC welcomed the suggestions for improving the regional cooperation framework. She hoped that there would be a small increase in the resource allocation to the regional programme. Quality and training were emphasized through capacity-building. While the many activities listed under the Democracy, Governance, Participation project could be interpreted as scattered, it should be realized that they all responded to specific country needs and priorities and that they would not all be undertaken in all countries to the same degree and level. Many of the concerns would be addressed through advocacy activities, given that "advocacy" was a key characteristic of the project. She confirmed the linkage and collaboration with the work of the G-7 in the Russian Federation between the project and database supported by that group. The environmental component needed more work, especially with regard to the definition of projects, which could include components on meeting European environmental standards, deforestation, energy efficiency, and environmental education. There was no clear indication of other partners except for the Global Environment Facility and Capacity 21. UNDP supported countries in acceding to the European Union. The Bureau was involved in the production of the Human Development Report through the participation of the Director in the Reader's Group. The national-based support of the regional programme contributed to the sustainability to the programme. Regional projects would provide complementary financing to national projects. The Regional Bureau was open to collaboration with other regions using the TCDC modality. Twenty per cent devotion to gender in programming was a UNDP corporate goal and should be seen as a minimum standard.

90. The Executive Board approved the first regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (1997-1999) (DP/RCF/REC/1).

Country cooperation frameworks for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

91. One delegation noted the positive feedback his Government had provided on the UNDP programme in Latvia. It was well focused and rational, despite limited resources. Of particular note were the interventions in human rights, sponsorship of a language training programme, and support to the judiciary, as well as assistance in developing a poverty alleviation strategy. His Government praised the performance of the Resident Representative in Latvia.

92. Another delegation underlined the need to ensure that in-depth contacts would be established with the European Commission secretariat with regard to UNDP support to countries wishing to join the European Union. Clarification was sought on the resource mobilization targets for Latvia, which seemed high and could occupy much of the Resident Representative's time.

93. One speaker asked UNDP to be certain that consultants hired to undertake projects be neutral and unbiased in their work.

94. The representative of Latvia expressed appreciation for the positive comments made. He noted that financing was for ongoing programmes in some cases, including the language training programme funded by the European Union. Human resources were limited and the work of the Resident Representative was much appreciated.

95. The representative of Uzbekistan paid tribute to the work of the Regional Bureau and its Director, especially in light of limited staff and many demands. He expressed support for the proposals made by other delegations during the discussion of the budget strategy for 1998-1999. The UNDP office in Uzbekistan was a good example of an integrated office. He highlighted the activities of a subregional programme on drug control, as well as activities within the regional programme which would benefit Uzbekistan.

96. The President informed the Executive Board that the questions of staffing and the level of the Director of RBEC would be discussed in the context of the budget strategy and the change management project.

97. The representative of Croatia stated that the programme in that country was targeted at the areas of most need, including support to rehabilitation and management of foreign aid. The liaison office in Croatia performed good work within existing limited resources.

98. One delegation, also on behalf of another, stated that it was the resoponsibility of the Administrator to make decisions on the staffing of RBEC, not the Executive Board.

99. The President concurred with that view.

100. The representative of Poland cited the recognition of cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in the CCF for Poland. The framework would help to solve pressing social and economic needs in Poland as well as facilitate the country's accession to the European Union.

101. The Deputy Director of RBEC thanked the Executive Board for its positive remarks. She noted that half of the non-core resources targeted for the Latvia programme had already been secured.

102. The representative of Romania thanked the Executive Board for the approval of the CCF for Romania. He noted the continued need for support by external funding to the economic reform and social protection programmes undertaken by his Government at the current time of transition. Romania was preparing for accession to the European Union. The CCF was designed to meet the national development goals and priorities, while pursuing the programme approach by areas of concentration and national execution modalities. Enhanced dialogue and partnership in devising the CCF would lead to greater visibility of UNDP activities in Romania. The representative noted that Romania would host the Third International Conference on New and Restored Democracies in September 1997, for which UNDP support had been requested. Resource mobilization,

particularly through cost-sharing, would be a priority of the current programming period. He thanked a number of Governments for their contributions to projects in Romania. Concern was expressed about the large number of responsibilities placed on the Resident Coordinator in Romania and other RBEC offices, in view of their limited staff and resources.

103. The representative of Latvia expressed his Government's appreciation for the approval of the CCF for Latvia. He also thanked the European Union and Nordic countries for their support. Clarification of the earmarking for "other resources" was sought.

104. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation frameworks for Croatia (DP/CCF/CRO/1), Romania (DP/CCF/ROM/1), Uzbekistan (DP/CCF/UZB/1), Latvia (DP/CCF/LAT/1), and Poland (DP/CCF/POL/1).

4. Country cooperation frameworks for Latin America and Caribbean region

105. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation frameworks for Colombia (DP/CCF/COL/1) and Panama (DP/CCF/PAN/1) on a no-objection basis. The Board took note of the extension of the fifth country programme for Haiti (DP/CP/HAI/5/EXTENSION I).

106. The Deputy Director of the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean thanked the Executive Board for its confidence in the programmes.

5. First cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries

107. The Director of the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries (SU/TCDC) introduced the first cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries for the period 1997-1999 (DP/CF/TCDC/1).

108. Many delegations took the floor to express their support for the framework and its proposed strategy and thematic areas as well as the work SU/TCDC had already undertaken.

109. The Permanent Representative of Tanzania, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, stressed the importance of TCDC. Commitment to TCDC and South-South cooperation was a key concept and strategic dimension in the Declaration of the Twentieth Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China. The report "New Directions for TCDC" ensured that TCDC would be a dynamic instrument of international cooperation. Strong support for the framework was expressed by the Group of 77 and China. The mandate of SU/TCDC should not be weakened and adequate resources should be provided to it.

110. One delegation, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group, highlighted the visibility of UNDP work in promoting TCDC and its flexibility in adopting the report on "New Directions for TCDC" when the need arose. Several members of that group, taking the floor individually, supported the goals of the framework. Interventions involving TCDC in UNDP could be even further strengthened. The Special Unit should be maintained as a separate operational

unit to promote regional and interregional cooperation. One delegation noted the role of SU/TCDC as focal point for the follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados in 1994. Closer links between TCDC and economic cooperation among developing countries (ECDC) could be promoted.

111. Another delegation, on behalf of the African Group, noted that the framework had developed focus areas beyond those of the fifth programming cycle, as recommended by the report on New Directions for TCDC. The inclusion of proposed solutions and benefits was welcomed. Interventions described in the new framework, particularly in trade and economic cooperation, would enhance South-South cooperation. The dynamic vision of the TCDC framework was recognized at the South-South Conference on Trade, Finance and Investment, held in Costa Rica in January 1997.

112. Several speakers stated that the framework could have included more analysis of the impact of past activities, including lessons learned. While the document pointed to certain activities undertaken in the past, it was not clear how to assess or quantify the results of those actions. More information on the linkage between TCDC activities and other UNDP work needed to be clarified. As a follow-up to the 1995 evaluation of on the use of special programme resources for the promotion of TCDC, it was stated that it would be useful to examine the impact of the work of SU/TCDC in relation to other organizations, the regional distribution, and the ultimate beneficiaries of its activities. UNDP could also initiate an evaluation of its own activities to determine how it might promote the increased application of TCDC to its programmes.

113. One delegation noted that the modalities for achieving the aims described in the framework could be elaborated, including references to the establishment of permanent and practical mechanisms for promoting TCDC. Linkage with focal points in programme countries could be strengthened through an implementation network. The speaker emphasized the need for national partners to remain the driving force in TCDC activities. National authorities should be involved in the decision-making process for programme and project approval.

114. Another speaker encouraged traditional donors to contribute to the South-South Cooperation Trust Fund, established by the General Assembly in resolution 50/119, in particular as a means of encouraging contributions from emerging donors. As an input to the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), SU/TCDC was requested to formulate a strategy for South-South cooperation involving Africa. The importance of creating an enabling environment for African development was emphasized by the delegation. The speaker suggested that a coordination unit that would ensure the smooth operation of TCDC programmes and projects be included in UNDP change management proposals. Information should be provided to the Executive Board in 1998 on the output of the TCDC programme in UNDP, based on the new strategic framework.

115. One delegation, supported by another, underlined the need for programme countries to originate ideas for TCDC. The speaker also saw TCDC as a means to achieve goals that went beyond the scope of one unit. Another delegation cited the positive experience in TCDC between countries with economies in transition and those in Latin America. Clarification was sought on the role of United

Nations regional economic commissions in respect of the initiatives to be carried out within the proposed framework. Another requested further information on whether science and technology and capacity-building would be included in the framework.

116. The representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) cited recent successful efforts of collaboration between the OIC and SU/TCDC.

117. The Director informed the Executive Board that lessons learned had been included in a more comprehensive way in the full version of the TCDC cooperation framework document, which was made available to the Executive Board. He stated that the mid-term review of the framework could focus on the impact of TCDC activities. He noted that the majority of TCDC projects had been executed by the United Nations Office for Project Services in the past, but that increased emphasis would be placed in future on national execution. In response to other queries raised, he cited the support of SU/TCDC for triangular cooperation, as well as horizontal transfer of technology, and pledged support for the second meeting of TICAD II. He recognized the contribution of the Government of Japan of $2 million to fund South-South cooperation. The Special Unit had worked closely with the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States in promoting TCDC activities, particularly in the area of governance. Assistance to young entrepreneurs would also be pursued. He noted that SU/TCDC worked closely with United Nations regional economic commissions. Science and technology were in fact priority areas in the TCDC framework. The Special Unit was working with the private sector, particularly in small and medium sized enterprises in Latin America. The Unit was the only part of UNDP subject to a special review, in the form of the High-Level Committee on TCDC, an intergovernmental body that met every two years.

118. The Executive Board took note of the first cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries (DP/CF/TCDC/1).

6. Format and timing for review of the new programming cycle

119. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support introduced the conference room paper on the format and timing for review of the new programming cycle (DP/1997/CRP.7).

120. One delegation requested further information on the nature of the review, whether it would include external inputs and what elements would be covered. Clarification was sought on the reference to monitoring achievement of corporate goals and the countries selected for review referred to in the conference room paper.

121. Another delegation referred to General Assembly resolution 50/120 and the request for evaluations on operational activities for development to be submitted to the General Assembly in 1999. The speaker queried whether there had been contacts with the Secretariat on that subject and requested further information on how UNDP assessed its work regarding evaluation in light of the request by the General Assembly.

122. The Assistant Administrator informed the Executive Board that a combination of external consultants and internal staff would conduct the evaluation, at both the headquarters and country levels. The evaluation would cover the primary objectives guiding the legislation adopted by the Executive Board, the quality, impact and focus of programming under the new arrangements, strengthening of the resident coordinator system, countries in special circumstances, and what had been achieved with regard to the objectives set. Management of resources would be reviewed. He noted that the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, one of the four sector groups created by the Secretary-General, would review the issues regarding follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/120.

123. The President cited the interest of the Executive Board in following the work of the executive committees set up by the Secretary-General.

124. The Executive Board took note of the conference room paper on the format and timing for review of the new programming cycle (DP/1997/CRP.7) and measures taken on the implementation of decision 95/23 and agreed that the decision would remain in effect until the review was completed in 1998.

125. Following its discussion on regional programmes, the Executive Board adopted the following decision:

97/9. Guidelines for improving the implementation of regional cooperation programmes

The Executive Board

1. Requests the Administrator to present to the Executive Board for its consideration and approval at the first regular session 1998, an implementation strategy paper for each individual regional cooperation programme; the implementation strategy papers should incorporate the following elements:

(a) The findings of the United Nations Development Programme evaluation entitled "Global, interregional and regional programmes: an evaluation of impact" (November 1996);

(b) A more detailed assessment of lessons learned from previous regional cooperation programmes and their integration into the programming and implementation of the next programmes;

(c) A narrow range of priorities and themes, within a programme-based approach, focusing on areas requiring regional cooperation;

(d) The identification of the role and comparative advantage of UNDP participation in initiatives for regional cooperation and its collaboration with relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions;

(e) Clear linkages between thematic areas in regional programmes and global programmes and between thematic areas and activities in regional programmes and priority programmes at the country level;

(f) An articulation of the strategy through objectives-based programme management techniques, such as the logical framework technique;

(g) A clear presentation of expected results, including identification of target groups and beneficiaries;

(h) A clear linkage between programme objectives and budgetary resources for implementation;

(i) An estimate of resource allocation among thematic areas and institutions;

2. Also requests that each implementation strategy paper contain a strategy for monitoring and evaluation, including practical performance indicators and benchmarks, which will enable the Executive Board to assess the impact of regional cooperation programmes;

3. Emphasizes the need for clear, concise language in the presentation of the regional implementation strategy papers;

4. Also emphasizes the need for regional ownership of the regional programmes and the importance of strengthening the capacity for regional execution by national, subregional and regional institutions, including by the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions;

5. Further emphasizes the need to ensure sustainability in the implementation of thematic initiatives included in the regional cooperation programme;

6. Requests the Administrator to present at the first regular session 1998, a timetable for the mid-term review of all regional programmes and to include in the implementation strategy paper for each region a proposal concerning the methodology for the mid-term review;

7. Also requests the Administrator, based on the experience gained during the implementation of the present decision, to elaborate strategic guidelines for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the regional programme that will apply to all regions.

B. National execution

126. The Associate Administrator introduced the conference room paper on national execution (DP/1997/CRP.8). He emphasized the growth in the modality, citing the preliminary 1996 figures, which indicated that national execution accounted for 79 per cent of project and programme budgets. It promoted ownership, increased self-reliance, and contributed to capacity-building and sustainability. There were some problems that needed to be addressed. Issues had emerged through the UNDP country experience, and had been analysed in the 1995 evaluation of national execution as well as by the Board of Auditors. One issue was the need for a new conceptual framework for national execution, based on a review of the concepts of execution, implementation and support. Secondly, an assessment of national capacities must be improved, through reference to

minimum requirements and practices being compiled by UNDP. Support to national execution was a third issue, in which the role of UNDP needed to be examined in terms of arrangements and funding. A fourth issue was the use of audit and accountability standards in national execution. In looking to the future, UNDP would consider the following issues: the need to provide services to governments; the need for execution by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and direct execution. The Associate Administrator noted that the current options available for carrying out UNDP activities were proving inadequate. It was a good time to re-examine the system of national execution and design more flexible modalities, policies and procedures, on which UNDP sought the comments of the Executive Board.

127. The Director of the Office for Evaluation and Strategic Planning presented the highlights of the 1995 evaluation of national execution, which had been distributed to the Executive Board.

128. Many delegations expressed their general satisfaction with UNDP efforts to promote national execution and reiterated the importance of the modality. The speakers appreciated the contribution by national execution to ownership, capacity-building, self-reliance and sustainability. The importance of discussing national execution was stressed. Many delegations emphasized that the future of UNDP depended on its ability to make national execution a success. One delegation suggested that a more gradual approach to national execution would lead to enhanced impact of the modality. Some speakers stated that they would have liked to have been consulted on their experience with national execution. One delegation, also on behalf of two others, noted that the paper was short and analytical, a good model for other papers. That speaker suggested that the paper could have included information on the utilization of national execution and programme delivery. There was also a proposal for discussion on national execution in the regional context.

129. The proposed closer collaboration with NGOs, research institutes, civil society, and the private sector was welcomed. Several speakers stressed that both NGOs and Governments had important roles to play in execution and that the collaboration should take place with the agreement of the Government and in consultation with the latter.

130. Many delegations opposed the establishment of management support units in UNDP country offices and requested clarification on why the phasing out of such support should be an objective in the only long term. The Executive Board stressed the role of UNDP in building national capacity to undertake execution, and that UNDP should facilitate such capacity building. If support units needed to be established, the Board indicated that they should be established within the national institution concerned.

131. Most speakers expressed disagreement with direct execution by UNDP. While recognizing that country office execution could be appropriate in very specific emergency countries and circumstances, such execution was not encouraged in normal circumstances. Some delegations queried the comparative advantage of UNDP to undertake execution and stated that UNDP should not compete with the United Nations agencies. Similarly, some Executive Board members requested

further information on the provision of certain services by UNDP, in relation to the UNDP mandate.

132. Several representatives pointed out that the introduction of national execution did not eliminate external components. In that regard, many delegations supported the participation of United Nations specialized agencies in national execution through the provision of technical services. General support was expressed for the inclusion of United Nations agencies in consultations on revising national execution policies and procedures. One delegation requested information on the role of the United Nations Office for Project Services in relation to national execution. Another delegation sought clarification about the reference in paragraph 12(d) in document DP/1997/CRP.8 to UNDP country offices in carrying out development related services at the country level, in particular with reference to the role of specialized agencies.

133. The importance of capacity assessments was recognized, as well as the need for clear requirements for national execution. One delegation suggested that an evaluation be undertaken on the impact of the decrease in Government staff resulting from structural adjustment programmes on the capacity of the Government to execute programmes.

134. The key role of monitoring and evaluation was recognized. Monitoring should be continuous throughout the duration of the project, with special attention to monitoring the strengthening of national capacity. It was therefore suggested that monitoring and evaluation should be appropriately ensured by local authorities, including through inputs on training and the development of procedures and manuals. One delegation underlined the accountability of UNDP to donors, including when funds were utilized through national execution. Another speaker requested that the 1995 evaluation findings be made available in French and Spanish.

135. One delegation referred to the report of the Board of Auditors report of December 1993, which had raised the issue of the absence of performance indicators for national execution programmes. The speaker noted that in accepting to have indicators UNDP had taken an important and significant step. It was noted that the Government of the United Kingdom was considering organizing a seminar on capacity-building indicators.

136. Concern was expressed about the link between national execution and low delivery rates, possibly resulting from lengthy formulation of programmes and difficulties in implementation.

137. The reaction to the proposed new conceptual framework was mixed. Some speakers questioned whether it was necessary and others requested involvement in its development.

138. Many representatives expressed the wish to continue the dialogue with UNDP on national execution and to be involved actively in its evaluation.

139. The Chief of the Multilateral Intergovernmental Organizations Section, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, underlined the need for involvement of the entire United Nations system in discussions on

national execution. She noted that national execution differed depending on the country in which it was undertaken. The coordinating role of UNDP was a key component given the number of entities involved in arranging national execution activities. She noted that national execution was included in the regular, rather than extrabudgetary budget, of specialized agencies.

140. The Associate Administrator responded to the comments made by delegates. He noted that, where appropriate, national execution could be pursued together with technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC). Execution by NGOs would be done only with the agreement of Governments. Programme support units should not be in UNDP offices; where they already existed, they would be phased out in favour of placing the capacity for technical support with the executing authority. He underlined the need for the Government and UNDP to reach mutual agreement on the outcome of the capacity assessment. He noted that some countries in crisis would like UNDP to carry out certain types of activities in order to reinforce neutrality. There had been a linkage between national execution and delivery, in particular in the formulation and implementation procedures used by Governments. Consistency in rules and procedures must be the norm. He urged countries to consider the proposed framework in a positive light, in particular because it was to the advantage of programme countries. He explained that the present framework was based on the tripartite agreement. In response to the query raised, he noted that UNDP was able to provide services, many in relation to the implementation of loans from international financial institutions in Latin America. He noted that UNOPS could be an implementing agency for all or part of a project. As national execution was used in bilateral programmes, it would be useful if UNDP and bilateral agencies could consult to simplify procedures for the modality.

141. The Director of the Office of Evaluation and Strategic Planning underlined the need for the continued monitoring of national execution, including the incorporation of indicators. Monitoring of national execution needed to be enhanced on a continuous basis. Efforts would be made to correct the inadequacies regarding baseline data in the new programming cycle. She noted that UNDP often faced the same constraints as donor agencies. Allocation of resources to monitoring and evaluation activities needed to be assured. A seminar on monitoring and evaluation would be convened by UNDP and the World Bank in April 1997. She informed the Executive Board that an impact study related to national execution was scheduled for 1997.

142. The Director of the Division of Operational Policies and Procedures explained that the revised procedures were much simpler than existing rules. He agreed that UNDP should be flexible in applying rules. He emphasized that available evidence showed cases of low delivery with national execution but noted that in the Latin America region, there was high use of national execution, and at the same time high delivery rates. He confirmed that provisions would be made for specialized agencies to be used for national execution through the United Nations systems support for policy and programme development (SPPD) and support for technical services (STS) modalities, and that the agencies would be consulted in the revision of the procedures. In some countries, UNOPS was being used in national execution or for procurement.

143. The Executive Board took note of the conference room paper on national execution (DP/1997/CRP.8) with the comments made thereon.

C. Earmarkings for the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) for 1997-1999

144. The Associate Administrator introduced the report of the Administrator on earmarkings for the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) for 1997-1999 (DP/1997/8).

145. One delegation expressed concern with the potentially unfunded portion of TRAC resources to be assigned as recorded in the document and requested information on how the secretariat would absorb the deficit.

146. The Associate Administrator stated that the preliminary TRAC earmarkings presented to the Executive Board were calculated based on projected core contributions of $3.3 billion for 1997-1999. However, the actual assignment and release of TRACs were a function of several interrelated qualitative and quantitative factors, most notably Executive Board approval of CCFs, preparation and review of quality programme outlines in support of CCFs and estimated resources available for core programme activities. In that regard, not only were current contribution estimates lower than expected but the situation was further exacerbated by the strengthening of the United States dollar, resulting in a further reduction of some $50 million.

147. Based on current estimates with regard to available resources for the 1997-1999 period, the TRAC 1 earmarkings had already been adjusted downwards by prorating them on the basis of projected core contributions of $3 billion for 1997-1999. The actual assignment of TRAC 2 resources for the 1997-1999 period would also take into account the latest available forecast of 1997-1999 core programme resources. Therefore, the potentially unfunded portion of TRAC resources to be assigned would be accommodated in the context of future assignments from line 1.1.2 and/or further adjustments in TRAC earmarkings based on available resources. That would be done at the time that the three-year planning period rolled forward one year, and additional resources accruing to the new year to be added to the cycle were about to be released.

148. The Executive Board took note of the report of the Administrator on the earmarkings for the target for resource assignment from the core for 1997-1999 (DP/1997/8).

III. UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

149. The Executive Secretary introduced the report on the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) (DP/1997/9) and gave an overview of its main points. He noted that the final financial figures for 1996 had been issued the day before the present meeting. There would thus be some differences in the figures presented in the UNCDF business plan made available to the Executive Board that day as compared with those shown in document DP/1997/9. He said that delivery was up to $43 million and that approvals had risen to $52 million. He

noted that UNCDF intended to maintain its level of reserves at $43-45 million, which equalled a total of two years of reserves. Those reserves were kept at a level of twice the mandatory level to ensure that UNCDF could meet its ongoing commitments for at least two years. The Executive Secretary also urged donors to increase their funding of UNCDF.

150. One delegation, also on behalf of another, thanked the Executive Director for his oral presentation and candid description of the challenges facing UNCDF. The report was a good example of how Executive Board documents should be written. It was informative and elaborated the comparative advantages of UNCDF. The description of negative elements included in the report was appreciated in that it gave the Board a complete picture. The evaluation of UNCDF after three years would lead to a decision on its future. Major donors had provided financing for three years in order to guarantee stability of resource provision. The Governments of Denmark and Sweden had increased their contributions and other countries were encouraged to join the group of donors. UNCDF could set a good example for other organizations.

151. A number of donor countries expressed interest in participating in the evaluation. One delegation appreciated the exchange of information between UNCDF and donors. Several speakers underlined the need for increased financial support to UNCDF.

152. More information on UNCDF activities in micro-financing was requested, including criteria for ensuring access to micro-credits. One speaker encouraged UNCDF to apply micro-credits as a comparative advantage and in collaboration with the World Bank. Another delegation queried whether micro-finance modalities had been taken into account in the strategy and if target beneficiaries had been assessed. One speaker requested information on the closing of micro-financing activities in Lesotho. Some delegations sought clarification about the use of local funds and eco-development. It was noted that increased activities in innovative areas, cited as 73 percent, could lead to a thin dispersal of resources.

153. The positive work of UNCDF in its attention to least developed countries was highlighted. The Fund's contribution to South-South cooperation had led to success in local development and joint activities with the Special Unit for Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries should be intensified. Several speakers expressed support for the Fund's work in support of local governance.

154. One delegation, praising the UNCDF business plan, queried how UNCDF would speed up the process of using best practices and how it would diversify its resource base. A draft decision on UNCDF was distributed by the speaker.

155. One speaker queried whether decentralization could impact negatively on experience gained in other areas. Another delegation expressed support for decentralization, also welcoming the revised project cycle, which allowed for increased participation.

156. Another speaker commented that UNCDF interventions were still too reliant on the project approach, which should now evolve into a programme approach as part of a global planning process, including local development and micro-

financing. The complementarity of UNDP and UNCDF had not been clearly highlighted in the document, including references to how the Fund supported local enterprises and job creation.

157. One speaker requested information on whether UNCDF had considered expanding use of national experts or United Nations Volunteers specialists.

158. The Executive Secretary requested that delegations submit their questions in writing to obtain a complete response, given the time limitation at the formal session of the Executive Board. He was very grateful for the support of UNCDF expressed by programme countries during the session. He noted that in the long run UNCDF must work in the framework of the programme approach. The seminar on eco-development had concluded that difficulties existed in working within the context of increased decentralization. With regard to complementarity with UNDP, it existed not only through the country cooperation frameworks, but also through specific programming in the field.

159. With regard to the innovative areas of intervention, the Executive Secretary responded to queries raised regarding micro-financing, stating that UNCDF was finding its niche, working through banks or non-governmental organizations. In general, as a small fund, UNCDF had to take risks, in which it might sometimes see failures. He noted that UNCDF did not work directly in encouraging government support to the private sector, but sought to see the parties work closer together. He underlined the fact that UNCDF did not go into areas where UNDP was not working.

160. The Fund would continue to examine its role in eco-development, with interventions in a few countries. He noted that the project in Lesotho would not be closed but that the funding could be re-channelled.

161. Discussions with new donors would continue in an effort to diversify the UNCDF resource base. The Fund's goal was to return to the 1991 level of $48.2 million: $50 million in delivery with $50 million mobilized was the goal of UNCDF.

162. In response to queries raised, he stated that the Fund sought to make contracts with southern institutions in an effort to find new partners. UNCDF was increasing its use of national experts.

163. The Executive Board approved the following decision:

97/8. United Nations Capital Development Fund

The Executive Board

1. Welcomes the report of the Administrator (DP/1997/9);

2. Endorses the implementation of the new policy focus of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, which concentrates its activities on local governance, decentralization, participation and micro-financing;

3. Also endorses the current reorganization efforts, with a view to creating a more decentralized and effective organization and recommends that in

the monitoring and evaluation, particular attention should be given to the modus operandi of the Fund and the relationship between headquarters and the field;

4. Encourages the Fund and the United Nations Development Programme to intensify their collaboration in all relevant areas, including in the design and implementation of country cooperation frameworks, taking into account the comparative advantages of the Fund, e.g., in the field of local governance and micro-financing;

5. Requests the Fund to improve the dissemination of successful project and programme experience in order to foster replication of these successes;

6. Welcomes the commitment of a number of donor countries to support the Fund in a more predictable and assured manner and invites traditional and new donors as well as recipient countries to contribute to the Fund.

14 March 1997

IV. UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Strategy outline for the budget

164. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration introduced the strategy outline for the budget (DP/1997/CRP.9), which had been requested by the Executive Board in its decision 96/41. In providing the outline, he noted the uniqueness of presenting such an outline six months prior to the Board's formal and detailed consideration of the budget. It was an opportunity that UNDP very much welcomed. It initiated an important consultative process on high-level strategy and allowed the Board to provide the organization with necessary guidance.

165. Several delegations thanked the Assistant Administrator for the outline, which provided very useful information in advance of the final review of the budget.

166. Many delegations referred to the linkage of the change management process and the budget for 1998-1999. They referred to the possible difficulties in incorporating all aspects of the change management process in the 1998-1999 budget, considering that some elements still needed to be finalized, and that the Board would take up the management of change formally only at the annual session in May 1997.

167. One delegation stated that the Executive Board had been informed previously that headquarters costs had decreased more than the costs at the country level. The figures in document DP/1997/CRP.9, however, showed the reverse and therefore needed clarification.

168. Some delegations stated that the income projection included in the paper could be optimistic in view of short-term and long-term effects of exchange rate fluctuations and the strength of the United States dollar.

169. Many delegations expressed concern that the uncertainty of future funding levels would have a direct impact on programme planning. One delegation, with reference to the "worst case" scenario indicated in par. 7 of document DP/1997/CRP.9, queried whether that scenario would affect country programmes. One delegation stated that the $3.3 billion target for resource mobilization was adopted at the time for planning purposes only.

170. Several delegations supported a zero growth budget strategy as proposed by the Administrator. Clarification was needed as to whether that was in real or nominal terms. Some delegations expressed a preference for a strategy of zero growth in nominal terms.

171. There was general support for the Administrator's innovative proposals on the collection of Government contributions towards local office costs (GLOC), and the offset of the reimbursement of income taxes that some staff members had to pay to their national Governments. Several delegations requested clarification on the proposed mechanism related to GLOC, in particular whether it would result in using programme funds to cover administrative costs. One delegation asked about the effect of applying the proposed mechanism on country offices without core programme resources. Clarification was also sought on the procedure regarding the offset of the reimbursement of income taxes.

172. Some delegations referred to earlier requests for information on the criteria used for allocating staff resources to country offices. One delegation underlined the inequalities that existed among certain country offices when comparing the size of the programmes. The priority for allocating core posts was to support the core programme. One delegation assumed that there would be a link between the general policy of the Executive Board on least developed countries and the allocation of staff resources. Another delegation stated that it was concerned that the Board would be micro-managing if it were to get involved in staffing issues for individual country offices. Decisions on staffing issues at that level should be the prerogative of the Administrator.

173. One delegation underlined that it had been impressed by the budget reductions that UNDP had introduced so far. She pointed out that most donor agencies had been undergoing similar reductions. UNDP must continue to aim for zero growth in nominal terms. More resources should be directed to programmes and UNDP should ensure that it used existing staff as efficiently as possible.

174. Several delegations recalled the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/227, which called for the examination of more stable and predictable funding for operational activities, including through guidelines by governing bodies. The delegations felt strongly that the Executive Board should continue to discuss the topic but that in order to do so it would need more information. It was noted that the issue would be discussed at the substantive session of Economic and Social Council in 1997. It was suggested that the final budget proposals could include possible mechanisms for obtaining resources on a predictable basis and discuss the consequences of lack of funding. The proposed strategy outline was a good beginning for considering new approaches.

175. Also referring to General Assembly resolution 50/227, one delegation stated that the resident coordinator system, in particular its financing, would need to be examined in light of the overall United Nations reform effort.

176. The President informed the Executive Board that the Bureau would prepare a discussion on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227 for the annual session. He noted that the issue would be discussed at the Economic and Social Council substantive session and at the third regular session 1997 of the Board.

177. One delegation, supported by others, underlined the growing demands that the United Nations system placed on the local UNDP offices, in particular with regard to the Resident Coordinator function. In the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) region, local UNDP offices were often the only United Nations system presence and had many responsibilities. That delegation, supported by others, requested information for the annual session on how the roles of resident coordinator and resident representative could be reconciled, especially in offices with relatively few staff, as in the RBEC region. Another delegation underlined the need for UNDP to have strengthened country offices in the RBEC region up to a level comparable with that in other regions. He also stated that equal treatment for regional bureaux must be realized.

178. One delegation proposed that an additional staff member be trained for two years in the UNDP office of his country to enhance local office capacity. He noted that the source of data used to calculate the revised figures for core programme resources for 1997 to 1999 was that provided by the World Bank for 1994. The delegation queried whether revised figures for programme resources would be available once the final statistics of the World Bank were available. Another delegation asked that the conference room paper contain information on net programme resources regardless of the "floor". He stated that information was a key element since the RBEC region did not benefit from other resources approved in Executive Board decision 95/23. He also requested that an organizational chart be provided at the annual session incorporating the results of the change process. Another delegation requested that RBEC be renamed the Bureau for Europe and Central Asia, as adopted by some other United Nations system organizations.

179. One delegation, in reaction to an earlier intervention, stated that it did not agree that there should necessarily be parity for the respective bureaux in financial or human resource terms since the levels of responsibility differed.

180. Another delegation urged UNDP not to allow reform to affect programme delivery but rather to show improved impact and efficiency.

181. One delegation, supported by others, emphasized the importance of the presence of the Administrator during the discussion of the budget item, as well as other items considered by the Executive Board during the session. The Secretary assured the Board that the Administrator did everything possible to attend the Executive Board meetings. He had been prevented from attending the discussion of the item under review owing to the last minute rescheduling of that item.

182. The Assistant Administrator welcomed the opportunity to have a dialogue on the proposed budget outline. He underlined the need to examine the underlying principles on which the budget would be prepared. There were both micro and macro issues, including the overall resource picture, as referred to by delegations. Three consecutive downsizing exercises had taken place, and in the judgement of UNDP, the critical mass had been reached. The Administrator was therefore proposing a zero-growth gross budget in real terms, not in nominal terms.

183. With regard to the proposed mechanisms related to GLOC and income tax reimbursements, the Assistant Administrator noted that GLOC had always been an obligation of programme countries and that UNDP would further encourage programme countries to meet these obligations through the newly proposed mechanism. The proposed mechanism would not effect the total available programme resources and thus not result in programme resources subsidizing administrative activities. He also noted that UNDP had a different system from the United Nations Secretariat with regard to the handling of reimbursements of income tax.

184. With regard to staffing capacity, the Assistant Administrator stated that UNDP was aware of the inequalities in the RBEC region and was reviewing the whole subject in the context of the change management process and the 1998-1999 budget.

185. On the subject of income projections and exchange rate fluctuations, the Assistant Administrator stated that UNDP was assuming that the current parity of the United States dollar would continue. He further underlined that UNDP would not approach the Executive Board for additional funding as a result of the change process. Regarding the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/227, he stated that the matter needed to be followed closely through discussions over the following months.

186. The Chief of Budget stated that monetary amounts were not the best indicators to compare past budget reductions in headquarters and country offices. He noted that the net impact of currency fluctuations and inflation was very different for headquarters and country offices. He also referred to the example given of replacing international professionals by national professionals at the country level, which resulted in reduced costs, but not reduced staff capacity. Examining the relative reduction of the number of staff was therefore a much better indicator of actual reductions. Over the last three biennia, core staff at headquarters had been reduced by 32 per cent as compared with 12 per cent in country offices.

187. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that no increase was being proposed to finance the change process. He stated that the net 1998-1999 budget could be as low as the current biennial budget in nominal terms or as high as the current biennial budget in real terms, depending on the final outcome of the conditions and assumptions mentioned in paragraph 19 of document DP/1997/CRP.9. He underlined the concern that given the six years of downsizing and with change ahead, another round of serious downsizing at the present time would have serious consequences for the ability of UNDP to maintain a strong global presence on behalf of the United Nations.

188. The Administrator informed the Executive Board that the requested information on country office staffing would be available at the annual session 1997.

189. The Executive Board took note of the strategy outline for the budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (DP/1997/CRP.9) and the comments made thereon.

B. Accountability system of UNDP

190. The Associate Administrator provided the Executive Board with an oral progress report on the implementation of an accountability framework within UNDP, which was being undertaken in the context of the change management initiative. A revision to the administrative circular "Accountability, Disciplinary Measures and Procedures" had been issued that week. It provided greater clarity on disciplinary offenses and fairness relating to due process and covered the staffs of UNDP, UNFPA and the United Nations Office for Project Services. There were now two committees and a panel that could review cases during the investigation stage. Those involving accountability and recovery could be referred to the Standing Committee on Personal Responsibility and Financial Liability or to the Management Review Oversight Committee. The cases involving discrimination and sexual harassment could be referred to the Grievance Panel on Sexual Harassment. Following the investigation stage, the case could then be taken to the Disciplinary Committee. The circular contained clear information on unsatisfactory conduct which could lead to investigation, which could in turn lead to disciplinary action. Due process was clearly laid out as it applied to different categories of staff.

191. The UNDP Management Review/Oversight Committee, with the participation of the Under-Secretary-General for Oversight Services, would facilitate the process that assured effective operation of the accountability framework of UNDP. The Committee would examine a broad range of issues that came under the areas of the UNDP mandate, mission and goals; shared values; capabilities; and monitoring and learning. A wide variety of review measures would be taken into consideration.

192. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that the Administrator planned to convene an informal meeting to discuss accountability, including a focus on governance aspects of the accountability framework. An introduction on the control self-assessment model and its implications for a more effective exchange between the Administrator and the Executive Board would be presented.

193. One delegation supported the proposal to hold an informal meeting during the annual session. More information on the Management Review/Oversight Committee would be welcomed. The self-assessment model was also supported.

194. The Director of the Division for Audit and Management Review informed the Executive Board that the membership of the Committee included the Associate Administrator, the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services, and senior managers in UNDP. He served as a resource person, along with representatives from the Office of Human Resources.

195. The Executive Board took note of the oral report of the Associate Administrator on the accountability framework.

UNFPA SEGMENT

196. The Executive Director made a statement to the Executive Board in which she informed members of developments since the previous meeting in January. She mentioned continuing efforts on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), including in the areas of women's empowerment and adolescent reproductive health. These included meetings that had taken place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 1997 on operationalizing reproductive health programmes in Africa and on improving adolescent reproductive health in sub-Saharan Africa. The Executive Director elaborated on various efforts to strengthen coordination and collaboration among United Nations agencies, including the use of Common Country Assessments. She also introduced to the Board the new Director of the Africa Division, Ms. Virginia Ofosu-Amaah.

197. The Executive Director reported that the Fund was in the process of preparing a paper on future funding requirements that she hoped to present to the Executive Board as a conference room paper at the annual session in May. She noted that UNFPA was also working on a study on absorptive capacity that would be presented at the annual session in 1998, and she thanked the Government of Denmark for the financial support it had provided to enable the Fund to carry out the study. In regard to national execution, she said that the ultimate goal was to reach 100 per cent as further national capacity was created.

198. During the discussion that followed, several delegations brought up the question of national execution, stating that they found the current figure of 30 per cent to be too low. They asked the Fund to step up its efforts to increase national execution and expressed the hope that the absorptive capacity study would be useful in presenting options for doing so. One delegation stated that the Fund should endeavour to work to a greater extent with national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as a way of increasing national execution. One delegation, speaking for another as well, expressed its concern that resource mobilization was not keeping pace with the increasing needs in the areas of population and reproductive health. The same delegation also asked the Executive Director for clarification on why the Fund had had what seemed to be a very low profile at the recent meeting of the Commission on Population and Development. Another delegation asked for more details on how UNFPA planned to contribute to the Special Initiative on Africa.

199. In her reply, the Executive Director said that all efforts made to increase national execution must be country-specific. Levels of development and national capacity varied greatly, and it was not possible to set general rules that were valid in all situations. It was necessary to be very pragmatic if the overall goal of providing health services to everyone as quickly as possible was to be realized. Increasing national execution was tied to building national capacity, which was a goal of every UNFPA programme, but capacity-building did not proceed at the same rate in every country. One reason why the Fund's level

of national execution appeared to be comparatively low was that UNFPA procured a significant amount of contraceptive supplies for governments, which then used those supplies in nationally-executed activities. Likewise, the Fund's technical backstopping services were a valuable way of increasing national capacity, but they were not national execution. Increased execution by national NGOs was something the Fund had always supported. A recent opportunity that could help in that regard was a management training centre for NGOs that was being set up by the Economic Commission for Africa, and UNFPA would take advantage of that.

200. Resource mobilization continued to be one of the Fund's highest priorities. The Executive Director reminded delegations that the ICPD was the only international conference that had set specific goals for resource mobilization; however, the countries of the world were only half way towards reaching those goals. One aspect that UNFPA was working on was the collection of data on what developing countries were doing themselves in terms of utilizing their own resources for population and reproductive health activities. The conference room paper that UNFPA would present to the Board in May would have more information on resource needs. The paper would also consider the effects if the resource goals that had been set were not achieved.

201. The Executive Director stated that several people had mentioned to her that the Fund's participation in the meeting of the Commission on Population and Development had seemed rather minimal. She was not convinced that that was the case - UNFPA had prepared three technical papers for consideration by the Commission and had actively taken part in the discussions on them. Delegations should remember, however, that the Fund was not the secretariat of the Commission and that it participated in the deliberations on those items for which it had provided inputs. In response to further remarks by one delegation, she said that the Fund would look into ways in which it could participate more effectively in the Commission.

202. Discussing the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the Executive Director said that she had had discussions with the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa with a view to increasing the Fund's role, including in the mobilization of resources. The Executive Secretary had just called a meeting on the health sector in which UNFPA would actively participate. In the theme group on basic education, the Fund made contributions in terms of such cross-cutting issues as population and gender education, for example, while in discussions on food security the Fund served as an advocate for emphasizing the role that population played in helping or hindering efforts to provide everyone in Africa with adequate nutrition. The Steering Committee of the Special Initiative on Africa would be meeting the following month in Geneva, and that should provide greater opportunities for clarifying the role of UNFPA.

V. UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

203. The proposed country programmes for UNFPA were introduced by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme). The Executive Board had before it for its

consideration a total of 24 new programmes, which were all based on the national priorities of the respective programme countries and had all been designed to respond to the Fund's comparative advantage in each case. She informed the Board that the Fund had been in the process, since September 1996, of revising its internal guidelines in order to increase the effectiveness and delivery of the programmes. These included guidelines on the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercise, on the devising of sub-programmes and projects, on implementation modalities, on procedures for monitoring and evaluation and on the efficient use of technical support services, including the country support teams (CSTs). She also reported that many of the Fund's professional staff had recently undergone training in logical framework programming techniques and thanked the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) of the United Kingdom for its support in making the training available.

204. The preparation of the more than 40 country programmes that had been presented to the Executive Board at the third regular session 1996 and the first two sessions of 1997 had been a challenging task for the Fund, and she assured members that every effort had been made to incorporate the Board's suggestions and to present the programmes in a clear and concise manner. She reminded delegations, however, that the present country programmes had been prepared some months earlier and that the improvement of the presentations was an ongoing process. The Fund was looking forward to the discussion at the annual session in May on the country programming process and on the best way of involving the Board in the design of UNFPA's programmes.

205. Commenting on the statement of the Deputy Executive Director (Programme), delegations commented that they were generally pleased with the proposed programmes and their formats and congratulated the Fund for making them available via the Internet for the first time. One delegation, speaking for two others as well, said that it supported the overall emphasis on reproductive health, the attention given to previously neglected areas such as female genital mutilation (FGM), necessary activities in the field of data collection, and the provision of needed contraceptive commodities. Those delegations found that the country programme documents were still too variable in quality and that sometimes the Fund's comparative advantage and the programme's priorities were not sufficiently spelled out. They, along with other delegations, requested a clearer sense of the breakdown of financial information according to sub-programme (what part of reproductive health expenditures, for example, would be for IEC and what part for services) and for a clearer exposition of the expected outcomes or "deliverables", difficult as that was to ascertain, and the benchmarks that would be used to measure progress. They also asked for a firmer indication of what multi-bilateral assistance was expected.

206. One delegation commented favourably on efforts to decentralize programme activities, noting that more and more resources were going directly to local levels of government and to local NGOs, and asked that more emphasis be placed on that. That delegation also urged the Fund to devote even more of its attention to its role as an advocate for goals of the ICPD and to be the prime mover in programme countries for the exchange of information and experiences on population and reproductive health services. Another delegation asked that the Fund give a clearer exposition in its country programme proposals of the comparative advantage of UNFPA in each of the programme countries. It also

requested that the Fund be more explicit about the staffing arrangements in its country offices and asked that more detail be provided about cooperation with other agencies and development partners.

207. In her reply, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) said that as far as multi-bilateral assistance was concerned there had been an internal Fund exercise to be more realistic in evaluating the possibilities for such assistance. At the same, it was also desirable to leave some flexibility in that regard because it did happen that sometimes more multi-bilateral assistance was forthcoming than had been anticipated, often during the time when sub-programmes and projects within a programme were being formulated. The current wording in the document was also designed to allow for the possibility that core resources might be greater than forecast, thus allowing for greater expenditures in the future than could currently be foreseen.

208. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) stated that the decentralization of programmes activities was increasingly supported by the Fund. It was the case, however, that capacity-building at the sub-national level required a lot of resources. She took note of the request for more information on the Fund's comparative niche in each programme country. New guidelines spelled that requirement out in greater detail, and the Board could expect to see that spelled out more clearly in future programme proposals. As for advocacy, there was widespread agreement that that needed to be better targeted and designed. It was also important to distinguish that advocacy took place at two levels -- at the global level, where the Fund advocated worldwide for the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action, and at the programme level, where the programme was designed in collaboration with the concerned government to help the government reach its own advocacy goals. She reiterated that the Fund would be coming to the Board at the annual session with concrete proposals on ways that members of the Board could have more systematic input in the design of the country programmes.

209. In accordance with the arrangements made by the secretariat, the country programmes for Eritrea and India were considered at the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment (see chapter VI).

Africa

210. The 12 country programmes being proposed for sub-Saharan Africa were introduced by the Director of the Africa Division. She reported that over the following five years the programmes would require a total of $110.3 million in UNFPA regular resources and an additional $29.3 million in other resources. Eleven of the countries were group "A" countries while Namibia was a group "B" country. The programmes had been designed to reflect the priorities of the countries concerned. Overall, 68 per cent of the proposed resources would be for reproductive health services and related activities. Those resources would be devoted to trying to alleviate one of the greatest challenges in Africa: the lack of availability of reproductive health services. The Fund's assistance would emphasize expanding the number of service points, focusing on rural and needy areas in particular. Many of the programmes had important elements designed to assist NGOs in providing information and/or services.

211. Given the critical importance of addressing adolescent reproductive health needs, 11 of the programmes had elements designed to expand pilot projects that had proved effective in helping meet the critical needs of that group. In those countries where FGM was prevalent, the programme would address the issue through advocacy and/or IEC activities directed to leadership groups and through the training of health personnel. The programmes would also advocate for girls' education, reproductive rights and the equality and equity for women. Activities in the area of population and development strategies would address the need to incorporate population variables and gender concerns in short- and medium-terms sectoral plans, including the need for up-to-date population data. In terms of advocacy, the programmes would work to develop advocacy partners, including NGOs and community-based and religious organizations and parliamentarian groups. The Fund's contributions would include helping to develop data that could be used in programming and in advocacy campaigns and providing training in advocacy skills.

212. In commenting on the proposed programmes, several delegations stressed the importance of human resource-building in the African context, which was one of the main requirements for enhancing absorptive capacity. One delegation asked if the Fund could consider strengthening its country offices in Africa and asked that the country programme presentations include more information on the staff available in the programme countries. The same delegation also requested clearer reference to any contemplated South-South cooperation in the programmes. One delegation complimented the Fund for increasing the amount of resources that it was devoting to sub-Saharan Africa. Several delegations welcomed the strong components addressing youth concerns. One delegation stated, however, that at times contemplated activities in that area were not adequately spelled out in the proposals nor was it clear how much commitment national governments had to such activities, which were often controversial. One delegation, speaking for two others as well, felt that it was not always clear how the Fund's proposed activities would coordinate and dovetail with those of other development partners. Another delegation welcomed the strengthening of the fight against FGM. It felt, however, that the programmes overall seemed to take too much of a "hardware" approach: in those cases in which the Fund built or rehabilitated health centres, how much training was also carried out so that the centres could be truly useful? Another delegation wondered how much any of the programmes planned to deal with difficult refugee situations that existed in many of the countries.

213. In her replies, the Director of the Africa Division stressed that the Fund had always supported South-South cooperation and was indeed reinforcing those efforts. She felt that the characterization of the proposals as taking a "hardware" approach was inaccurate in that the "software", i.e., increasing human resource capacities, was always a priority for the Fund. The Fund's most important input was training and human capacity-building. The Fund had developed a programming framework that could help to tackle the problem of FGM. The programmes would certainly focus on youth concerns and if that was not always clear it was because in the brief programme documents it was not possible to include every detail. In response to questions about refugees, the Executive Director said that the Fund was undertaking an inventory of what it was doing and evaluating how it could best operate in that area. She hoped to have a

paper providing more detail on this topic available for the Board's third regular session in September 1997.

214. In comments on specific programmes, several delegations welcomed the programme for Angola, which provided much needed assistance in a difficult situation, noting its efforts to improve overall reproductive health, including its valuable IEC component. Several delegations felt that the programme must be supported but that it needed to be followed closely so that it could be flexible in what was a very fluid situation. Some delegations wondered whether under the circumstances the proposed programme might be over-ambitious, questioning whether it was practical to attempt activities in six different provinces. Another delegation, however, felt that the six provinces were well selected but asked for more detail on how it would be coordinated with a programme of the European Commission that would focus on three provinces. The delegation of Angola thanked the Fund for the proposed programme, which it felt would help to rebuild the needed health infrastructure devastated by 30 years of war. The delegation of Brazil offered to supply expertise in a South-South context in support of the proposed programme.

215. The Director of the Africa Division reported that there was extensive cooperation and collaboration among development partners in Angola and that the programme had been formulated in cooperation with the European Commission and was designed to complement its programme. Of course the Fund would be monitoring the programme very closely and would adjust it as necessary if conditions deteriorated.

216. In comments on the proposed programme for Burkina Faso, one delegation asked for clarification on whether the country had the absorptive capacity to implement the proposals, stating that lack of capacity had been a problem in the past. Another delegation felt that the proposed programme did not adequately address past problems and felt that it would need strong efforts in order to make it work.

217. The delegation of Burkina Faso welcomed the proposed programme. It stated that implementation had been a problem in the past but that since 1995 the head of state had given the highest priority to improving abilities and this was bearing fruit - in 1996 the UNFPA programme had had an implementation rate of 86 per cent. The proposed programme's four-year cycle responded to the Government's development priorities and was in accord with the country strategy note. It would be implemented in the context of the process of decentralization that was now under way. The Government was very positive about the proposed programme and welcomed the cooperation of all its development partners. Another delegation stated that the clear position of the Government of Burkina Faso was welcome and that the Board needed to respect its assurances that efforts to redress past problems had been made in the past two years. The Director of the Africa Division felt that the delegation of Burkina Faso had responded to the concerns of members of the Board, and she could attest that the Government had taken steps to improve absorptive capacity and to implement activities.

218. Discussing the programme designed for the Central African Republic, one delegation pointed out that it would be working in very difficult circumstances and hoped that efforts would be made to build up the public sector and would not

rely on the private and NGO sector entirely. The Director stated that the UNFPA programme was focused on the public sector.

219. On the Gambia programme, one delegation wondered what were the linkages between the Population Secretariat and the National Population Commission. The Director of the Africa Division responded that the Population Secretariat, which services the Commission, had been set up to foster synergies among the different actors in the population and reproductive health sector in Gambia. The Commission was chaired by the President of the Republic; such high-level support was one of the reasons for optimism in respect of the gains that could be made in that country. The representative of Gambia stated that there was close collaboration between the Fund and the Government in his country and that advocacy efforts had been very collaborative and successful. He thanked UNFPA for the increased resources being provided to the Africa region.

220. In discussing the proposed programme for Guinea, one delegation felt that it focused too much on activities at the provincial level. The same delegation wondered why the Fund was sending staff from Dakar rather than using what was available in Conakry. The Director of the Africa Division responded that the Fund's activities focused on both the central level, with activities taking place in Conakry, the capital, and at the provincial level. The Fund maintained a country office in Conakry and used national expertise to a great extent. The regional CST was headquartered in Dakar and was used for technical backstopping as needed. The delegation of Guinea thanked the Fund, stating that the Government was firmly committed to reaching the programme's goals, which would help build up both human resources and the country's health infrastructure, producing an overall improvement in the country's reproductive health situation.

221. In commenting on the proposed Namibia programme one delegation felt that it was a very good one but questioned whether the amount of the financial resources coming from regular resources and those being sought from multi-bilateral assistance was not disproportionate. The delegation of Namibia felt that the proposed programme would complement the Government's own efforts in terms of youth and women and appreciated the emphasis that was being given to reproductive health. The reproductive health situation of young people, especially, was a great concern of the Government, and the delegation noted that the rate of school drop-outs was increasing. The delegation thanked the Fund as well as donor governments active in the country.

222. In commenting on Nigeria, one delegation welcomed the proposed programme and said that although its development agency would cooperate with the Fund in ensuring the supply of needed contraceptives, there would still be a gap that needed to be filled. In that regard, the Director informed the Board that the World Bank and Nigeria had just signed a $12 million loan agreement for the provision of contraceptives.

223. One delegation felt that the Togo programme needed to place greater emphasis on improving the status and conditions of women and should provide for greater cooperation with women's NGOs. The Director replied that the Fund was working very successfully with women's NGOs in Togo and regretted that the programme document had not made that clear.

224. On Uganda, several delegations expressed the hope that the programme was not too ambitious and did not raise hopes too high. Another delegation felt that it was important to continue the implementation of strategies that were already in place and not attempt too much. In that regard, it wondered how it was possible to train 5,000 traditional birth attendants (TBAs). One delegation wondered what support was being given to the Population Secretariat to promote coordination, given that the focal point for reproductive health for most agencies was the Ministry of Health. Its development agency had taken part in the PRSD and had found it very useful. The delegation wondered how cost-effectiveness the referral system for maternal health was. It welcomed the work that was going to be done with NGOs and felt that there was even greater scope for cooperation with them in Uganda. The delegation supported the proposed advocacy and IEC activities but felt that resistance to family planning, for example, was not as strong as the programme document had stated. One delegation wondered whether the high percentage of the total programme that was being sought in multi-bilateral assistance was justified.

225. In her response, the Director of the Africa Division assured those delegations that felt that the Uganda programme might be too ambitious that the programme responded effectively to the country's needs and had been designed in support of the Government's goals. On the issue of the referral system (RESCUER programme), she informed the Board that recent evaluations had shown much progress, and there were several reasons for optimism -- the health referral system was working well and the maternal mortality rate had declined as a result. WHO was integrating the referral system into its mother and baby care package. The Ministry of Health had incorporated the expansion of the referral system into its 5-year plan, and the World Bank was exploring the possibility of replicating the system in a number of districts. The training of such large numbers of TBAs would be accomplished by cascade training, which had worked in the past. In terms of the proposed multi-bilateral assistance, she felt that it was not unjustified in that the country was receiving a lot of bilateral assistance and several governments had expressed interest in the proposed programme.

226. Since a separate discussion on the proposed programme for Senegal had been requested, the President opened the floor to comments and questions on that programme. The representative of Senegal informed the Board that the proposed programme had been developed in close cooperation with the Government and that it responded to the country's needs and to the current process of decentralization. He said that the country was about to celebrate National Youth Week and hoped UNFPA would be taking part. In discussing the proposed programme, one delegation felt that perhaps the goals were too modest. Another delegation, however, stated that it felt the goals of the proposed programme were too ambitious and hoped that the proposed activities would not duplicate the efforts of others. Its development agency had supported the provision of contraceptives in the past, but there was a question as to how future supplies could be assured. Another delegation asked for clarification on what it felt had been the failure of the programme to introduce Norplant in the country. Another delegation said that its Government's research mission to Senegal had found a great gap between urban and rural areas in the availability of reproductive health services. What was the proposed programme planning to do about that?

227. In his reply, the UNFPA Representative for Senegal commented on the question of whether the proposed programme was too ambitious or not ambitious enough by saying that within the financial resources of $15 million that were being proposed, the proposals were felt to be within the limits of the possible. The Fund was discussing with the Government whether it should concentrate its efforts in a few regions and, if so, which ones would be most appropriate. Decentralization was well under way in the country, but there was a great need of data at the sub-national levels, including on such questions as the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR), in order to guide and direct programmes. As a result, a new demographic and health survey was being undertaken with the support of the World Bank and USAID, and this should give a better indication of where programme efforts should be concentrated.

228. Was Norplant a failure? That was not clear; an evaluation was being conducted to see whether it had been successful or not. It should be noted, however, that other countries, such as Guinea-Bissau, had emulated Senegal's Norplant programme. USAID was supplying condoms in Senegal, while the Fund supplied injectables so those contraceptive needs at least would continue to be met. In commenting on past achievements, the UNFPA Representative reported that 14 reproductive health referral centres had been renovated under the past programme and two more were currently in the process of renovation. As part of the efforts throughout Africa to focus attention on the reproductive health needs of adolescents, the Fund would be cooperating very actively in the events of National Youth Week, including sponsoring fora on youth and population and on reproductive health questions.

229. The Executive Board approved the proposed programmes for Angola as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/173, Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/CP/187) Central African Republic (DP/FPA/CP/182), Comoros (DP/FPA/CP/171), Gambia (DP/FPA/CP/178), Guinea (DP/FPA/CP/181), Namibia (DP/FPA/CP/175), Nigeria (DP/FPA/CP/190), Senegal (DP/FPA/CP/176), Togo (DP/FPA/CP/172) and Uganda (DP/FPA/CP/177).

Arab States and Europe

230. The Director of the Division for Arab States and Europe presented to the Executive Board the proposed programmes for Albania, Lebanon and Sudan, all of which had been designed to help the Governments of those countries reach their population and development objectives. She stated that the main challenges in many of the Arab states were high maternal mortality and morbidity rates associated with limited access to reproductive health services and information and the continuance of harmful traditional practices as well as the low status of women and girls. The approach that UNFPA was taking in helping the governments of the region respond to those challenges was to upgrade the knowledge and technical skills of national staff and to intensify IEC activities that could help mitigate sociocultural constraints. In addition to strengthening government capacities, new partnerships were being formed with NGOs and the private sector.

231. The proposed programme for Lebanon would help the Government improve reproductive health services in underserved areas of the country, including those with large numbers of internally displaced populations. In Sudan, the

Fund would concentrate on 6 disadvantaged states, out of a total of 26 in the country, providing support for integrated reproductive health services and IEC as well as activities designed to improve the status and conditions of women. In response to previous comments during the Board discussion on the need to respond to refugee situations, the Director asked the former UNFPA Representative for Sudan (currently covering Albania) to provide some details on the ways in which the Fund had worked to ameliorate the reproductive health situation of the large numbers of displaced persons in Sudan.

232. The situation in the countries of central and eastern Europe was different from other regions, and those prevailing conditions were well illustrated by the case of Albania, for which the Fund was proposing a new programme. The most pressing concern throughout the region was the high rate of abortions, which was being used as a method to regulate fertility in the absence of modern contraceptives. In addition, there was a rapid increase in the incidence of STDs. Given these great needs and the Fund's limited resources, the proposed programme for Albania would focus almost entirely on reproductive health-related issues.

233. The UNFPA Representative for Albania reported that given the complex socio-economic and political situation, as illustrated by the widespread civil unrest that was taking place in the country, it was necessary to be extremely flexible in carrying out programme activities. In that regard, he reported that the Fund enjoyed very favourable working relations with the Government, other United Nations agencies and national and international NGOs, which should allow the adjustment of the proposed programme to complement the efforts of other partners once the situation had stabilized. He continued to feel optimistic that during the term of the proposed four-year programme it would be possible to meet its goals.

234. The proposed programme was welcomed by several delegations, feeling that it was well drafted and well focused and illustrated the approach that could be taken to meeting the challenges facing other countries of the region, especially the focus on reproductive health. In that regard, delegations were pleased that the Fund had set up two country offices in eastern Europe, the one in Albania and the other in Romania, each of which would deal with several countries in the region. One delegation asked for more information on the status of UNFPA activities in Armenia, which were being managed from the Albania country office.

235. One delegation asked if the Albania programme had the approval of the Parliament and Government while another asked if the Government had taken a position on the ICPD Programme of Action. Another delegation expressed the wish that the programme take maximum advantage of existing infrastructure, which was currently underutilized because of the difficult economic situation. Given the difficult situation, the delegation urged the donor community to understand the temporary needs of the region, where poverty had consequences that could have long-term deleterious effects on the reproductive health of the people. Another delegation commended the involvement of NGOs and asked for more information on how the programme was being coordinated with other bilateral and multilateral development partners.

236. The representative of Albania thanked the Fund for the work that it was doing in the country, where the new country office had just become functional, and he also expressed the appreciation of his Government to the other donors who were active in the country. He noted that the problems that had to be tackled were not just health issues but were related to social problems as well, i.e., the high incidence of abortion, the lack of family planning services and commodities, the spread of STDs and the low status of women. These were all tied to the poverty prevalent in the country, which had just been made worse by the collapse of a series of financial pyramid schemes and the current social unrest. He said that his Government would welcome any support that could be provided by donor governments or agencies.

237. The UNFPA Representative for Albania welcomed the support that had been expressed by delegations for the proposed programme. He said that they were quite right in saying that the problems in Albania were also problems in other countries of the region, the differences between them being differences of scale and magnitude not of substance. The overall aim of the Fund's activities was to help people have access to and use modern contraceptives rather than turning to abortion; that would require extensive IEC efforts in addition to the provision of services. Information campaigns needed to be carried out to combat the increase in STDs, including HIV/AIDS. As for cooperation with other development partners, he noted that field-level cooperation was very good, with regular meetings of all donor agencies, and that UNFPA was currently chairing the AIDS theme group. There were several bilateral donors in the country, and there had been some interest in supporting the UNFPA programme through the multi-bilateral mechanism. The Government of Albania was very committed to the proposed programme and to the ICPD Programme of Action, having established a National Population Committee as well as a reproductive health section within the Ministry of Health and had sponsored the first National Population Conference.

238. The Director of the Division for Arab States and Europe thanked the delegations for their comments and said that she and her staff would be happy to furnish any additional details that delegations wanted on a bilateral basis. As for Armenia, she informed the Board that there had been some problems in getting started but that the Fund had established a good working relationship with the UNDP country office and that planned activities could go forward, the provision of contraceptives to the country having already been undertaken. Two staff members, including the UNFPA Representative for Albania, who also covered Armenia, were planning a trip to Armenia to help evaluate the country's needs.

239. In discussions on the proposed programme for Lebanon, one delegation raised a number of points. It felt that the demographic statistics used in the proposed document were inaccurate and that the document neglected the contributions that other donors were making to the health sector. If the Fund was not aware of those contributions, how could it coordinate the activities that it was undertaking and how could it be sure that it was carrying out the activities that were most needed? The delegation also emphasized that the public sector needed support and hoped that that was not being neglected. Finally, it argued that the amount of money being proposed was not enough to meet the needs of the country in its post-war situation.

240. In reply, the Director said that the Fund was obligated to use official United Nations statistics, which were the best available. However, everyone realized that demographic data for Lebanon were problematic since the last official census had taken place more than 60 years previously. That was why the Fund had supported a major population and housing survey as well as a PAPCHILD survey. The data from these surveys were currently being analysed would be disseminated and used in planning programme activities. She stated that there were indeed other donors in the health sector in Lebanon but that they were concentrating their support on the rebuilding of infrastructure while the Fund was concentrating on training of service providers and the provision of needed medical equipment, supplies and contraceptives. The Fund was indeed focusing its efforts in the public sector so that the Government could build up its primary health care services to reach the underserved populations unable to afford private services. The Director acknowledged that the amount of funds being provided under the proposed programme was small in relation to the great needs. However, the UNFPA Representative and the Country Director were actively pursuing the possibility of multi-bilateral assistance and had received initial indications of interest from several donors.

241. The Executive Board approved the proposed programmes for Albania as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/180, Lebanon (DP/FPA/CP/184) and Sudan (DP/FPA/CP/194). Following that approval, the delegation of Lebanon expressed its appreciation to the Fund and to other United Nations organizations that were helping the country to rebuild. The delegation said that the programme was focusing on human resource development, which was crucial. The Government wholeheartedly supported the goals of the ICPD and the Fourth World Conference on Women and was pleased that the new UNFPA programme would help it reach its goals of improving the health of Lebanese families.

Asia and the Pacific

242. The Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific made a brief statement to introduce the proposed programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic. He noted that the other proposed programme in the region, the one for India, had already been discussed and approved by the Board earlier in the context of the joint segment with UNDP. The Lao People's Democratic Republic was a country that had been classified in group "A" under the Fund's new approach for resource allocation. The country had great needs in terms of improving its reproductive health and population situation, and therefore the proposed programme had components in all three of the Fund's core programme areas. As with all programmes, a major goal would be to strengthen national capacities, in this case by providing training in programme management, coordination, monitoring and evaluation. The programme would also focus on gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women and would work with such mass organizations as the Lao Women's Union and the Lao Youth Union.

243. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic reported that population growth in his country was still quite high, stating that the Government would like to stabilize it at a rate of 2.4 per cent a year. The proposed UNFPA programme was in harmony with the Government's Five-Year Development Plan and with the Country Cooperation Framework that the Board had just approved for UNDP. The Government was pleased that it gave such emphasis

to capacity-building, and the Government would do its utmost to achieve the goals of the proposed programme. There was at present no UNFPA office in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and he asked the Fund to look at the possibility of having at least one full-time staff member resident in the country. He thanked the Board for its support.

244. The Executive Board approved the proposed programme for the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/174.

Latin America and the Caribbean

245. The Director of the Division for Latin America and the Caribbean opened the discussion on the proposed programmes in the region by stating that the proposals for Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean, Haiti and Peru represented a good cross-section of the population and reproductive health challenges facing the region as a whole. Although the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean had made great strides both economically and socially, there were still great inequalities and still populations with great needs in the areas of the Fund's mandate. Since resources were limited, however, UNFPA would have to carry out key strategic interventions that could really make a difference. That would be done by supporting national execution so that countries could increase their own capacities for carrying out population and reproductive health programmes and by concentrating assistance on the populations most in need.

246. The Director stated that the governments of the region had requested the Fund's assistance in carrying out advocacy efforts to build support for population and reproductive health programmes as well as support for training activities that would increase national capacity. One of the lessons learned from past activities was that UNFPA assistance had sometimes been spread too thinly and that it was necessary to concentrate the Fund's support so that it could have a measurable impact and directly reach its intended beneficiaries. At the same time, however, it was necessary to continue to support certain efforts at the central level, such as those for integrating population concerns in development strategies and, most particularly, in poverty alleviation programmes.

247. Several delegations from the region, including Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname, spoke on the proposed programme for the countries of the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. One delegation said that it was pleased to note that it was firmly based on the principles of cooperation and collaboration with the governments concerned. Several delegations said that they were pleased that it emphasized the needs of adolescents, especially in terms of IEC, which was in accord with national priorities, and that it supported training efforts. Several delegations mentioned that capacity-building at the national level was very important, with one delegation stating that the Fund's support would help build up institutional capacities for carrying out census activities in the year 2000. Delegations also stated that they were pleased that the programme focused on populations with the greatest reproductive health needs. One delegation felt, however, that the proposal overemphasized advocacy activities at the expense of reproductive health and

that it did not devote enough resources to population and development strategies.

248. In regards to the proposed programmes for the Dominican Republic, El Salvador and Haiti, the delegation of Brazil stated that it was important to encourage South-South cooperation with other countries in the region and that its country had had valuable partnerships with those countries in terms of training for population and development strategies and offered to continue and to augment its assistance.

249. The Director for Latin America and the Caribbean expressed her appreciation to all the delegations that had spoken, saying that she was particularly gratified with the support expressed by the Caribbean countries themselves, which indicated the very worthwhile cooperation that was going on in that region. In response to the question concerning how the resources were allocated within the sub-programmes of the proposed programme, she stated that the allocations had been worked out in collaboration with all the governments concerned and that a first draft of the proposed programme had been forwarded to all of those governments and had received their concurrence. As always, the Fund would have liked to have more resources to devote to other areas, but unfortunately those resources were not available. She said that all of the comments would be forwarded to the UNFPA country office for the Caribbean. She thanked the delegation of Brazil for its offer.

250. The Executive Board approved the proposed programmes for Cuba as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/188, the Dominican Republic (DP/FPA/CP/186), Ecuador (DP/FPA/CP/192), El Salvador (DP/FPA/CP/189), the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean (DP/FPA/CP/179), Haiti (DP/FPA/CP/191) and Peru (DP/FPA/CP/185). Following the approval, the delegation of Cuba expressed its appreciation to the Fund as well as to other donors that were working to improve reproductive health conditions, especially for adolescents, in the country. The delegation of Ecuador also expressed its appreciation, noting however that the new programme represented a decrease in funds from the previous programme. The fact that the general population and reproductive health indicators for the country had improved did not take into account the fact that there were many pockets of the population where conditions were much worse than the average; there were, for example, serious discrepancies between urban and rural areas. He asked that the Board keep these factors in mind as it considered future programmes and reviewed the criteria for resource allocation.

251. The delegation of the Dominican Republic thanked the Board for the programme that had just been approved. He pointed out, however, that the fact that the Dominican Republic was no longer a priority country for UNFPA assistance meant that the serious problems being faced by large segments of the population could not be addressed, especially since the Government was having to cut social expenditures in the face of difficult economic circumstances. The delegation hoped that the Board could be more flexible in taking these situations into account. The delegation of the Netherlands thanked the Board on behalf of the Dutch territories in the Caribbean. The delegation of El Salvador expressed its appreciation for the new programme, saying that it was an investment in human capital and would strengthen national capacity. The Government of El Salvador was concerned, however, with the decrease in the

resources that were available and asked the donor governments to reverse that trend. The delegation of Haiti expressed its gratitude for UNFPA assistance, which was coming at a time when the country was undergoing a very difficult transition period. The representative of Peru tabled a statement in which it expressed its appreciation for the UNFPA programme, which would help the country achieve its population and development goals, which was the country's highest priority in terms of social development. He stated that the country was pursuing a comprehensive strategy of family planning that did not in any way contravene the constitutionally-guaranteed right to life from conception. That strategy and a related national IEC campaign were reflections of the Government's firm commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action.

VI. JOINT UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT

252. In accordance with the arrangements made by the secretariat, the UNDP country cooperation frameworks for Eritrea and India anda the UNFPA country programmes for Eritrea and India were considered at the joint UNDP/UNFPA segment.

UNDP: Country cooperation framework for Eritrea

253. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa introduced the first country cooperation framework for Eritrea (DP/CCF/ERI/1), which had been requested for discussion by the Executive Board. Following an overview of the CCF, she noted that the Government of Eritrea had raised some objection to the process of approval of the CCF by UNDP. The Government had included in the advisory note its own perspective, which it would have preferred to see in the CCF submitted to the Board. That perspective had been taken into account in the preparation of the CCF, but not in the form originally conceived by the Government. She had discussed the issue with the Government the previous evening, and read the text of a statement to the Executive Board as prepared by the Government:

"UNDP assistance should concentrate mainly on capacity-building (human resources development and training, equipment, processes and procedures, regulations systems, etc.) and institution-strengthening; Eritrea wants to see a flexible programming approach and preferably to have only one programme (capacity-building), coupled with a few other minor ones (e.g., support of constitution-making, refugees, women) to allow for diversity; funds allocations should be consolidated and concentrated on a few key issues of current and long-term concerns that the Government feels are of high priority within a programme; UNDP assistance should effectively contribute to Eritrea's national development efforts without fostering any form of dependence; the ongoing bridging programme resources should be re-targeted/re-allocated to high-leverage activities but with emphasis still on capacity building; and the Government's reference to capacity-building basically include: institution capacity-building and human resources development and capacity-building."

254. The Assistant Administrator reported that there was no inconsistency in the CCF with the Government's prerogatives and that the substance had been incorporated.

255. One delegation referred to his Government's satisfaction with the work of both UNDP and UNFPA in Eritrea. The UNDP programme was on the right track.

256. One delegation, also on behalf of another, agreed with the analysis contained in the CCF regarding the development situation and with the concentration on capacity-building and human resources development as well as the approach to use local expertise as a priority. As Eritrea was a young country, they wondered whether the use of national execution would be appropriate at the present time. They underlined the need for coordination in the country by UNDP and in close cooperation with other donors.

257. Another delegation expressed support for both UNDP and UNFPA programmes in Eritrea. It was gratifying to hear that close collaboration was taking place. The United Nations community was new and small and the support of UNDP to different United Nations agencies helped in achieving complementarity in assistance to Eritrea. The first CCF was good and it was useful to have a joint presentation of it with the UNFPA country programme. Realizing that a joint document was not feasible at the present time, it would be productive to elaborate further on how the two organizations collaborated in Eritrea and how coordination on statistical development and capacity-building took place. Information on assistance to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations was also sought.

258. The President noted that the Bureau needed to discussion the methods for having joint documentation describing the activities of UNDP and UNFPA in particular countries.

259. The Assistant Administrator thanked the delegations that had supported the CCF for Eritrea. The Government was very judicious about ownership of activities in the country and about preserving its independence. The Government was in the process of setting out guidelines for international NGOs working in Eritrea. Certain areas of concentration had been identified, as elaborated in the Government's statement.

260. The Resident Representative of UNDP in Eritrea also thanked delegations for their comments. He stated that UNDP would continue to strive to work effectively in cooperation with the Government in Eritrea. National execution could be an appropriate modality, in particular since it did not exclude agency execution. Wherever possible, people wished to learn by doing rather than by watching. Coordination with the United Nations system had been exceptionally good in Eritrea. Work on the census would involve a number of United Nations agencies. An outline for a country strategy note had been approved by the Government. A minimum of three thematic groups would be formed to meet the needs of the Government.

261. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for Eritrea (DP/CCF/ERI/1), taking into account the perspective of the Government as read out by the Assistant Administrator.

UNDP: Country cooperation framework for India

262. The Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific introduced the first country cooperation framework for India, 1997-2001 (DP/CCF/IND/1). The Resident Representative in India also made introductory remarks.

263. Speakers thanked the secretariat for arranging a joint UNDP and UNFPA presentation and an informal discussion on United Nations system cooperation in India. Many delegations commended the excellent coordination of [illegible]ted Nations operational activities and the positive relations of UNDP with [illegible]teral donors in India. The strong leadership of the Resident Coordinator [illegible] cited. Several representatives stated that the experience in India was an example for other countries to follow with regard to inter-agency coordination. The increased attention of UNDP to social sectors was laudable. A recent positive example cited by one speaker was the role played by UNDP in encouraging the inclusion of the social sector in the agenda of the India Development Forum. A Country Human Development Memorandum would be prepared for the next meeting of the Forum. Several speakers supported increased cooperation with programmes of bilateral aid agencies as those efforts had been successful in the past.

264. Some speakers, while recognizing that UNDP had undertaken major efforts to streamline its activities, pointed to the still apparently large number of areas of involvement, without identification of a particular niche for UNDP. It was thus possible that there could be a scattering of efforts, given the size of the country and the relatively small CCF budget. The implementation strategy of the programmes also appeared centralized and UNDP was encouraged to explore ways to explore innovative ways of involving the private sector and grass-roots beneficiaries in its programmes. One delegation queried whether the CCF included a technical cooperation among developing countries component.

265. Information was requested on the linkage between the CCF and the UNFPA country programme and the United Nations System Position Statement on India of January 1997, in particular with reference to the role of specialized agencies. An explanation of how lessons learned were reflected in present and future cooperation was also sought. One delegation requested information on the resource allocation to the thematic areas described in the CCF and on the scope and causes of a decline in programme delivery.

266. UNDP was requested to include socio-economic indicators for the CCFs on the front page of the document. Both UNDP and UNFPA were requested to provide information on staffing in country offices in the CCFs and country programmes.

267. The representative of India expressed his gratitude to the Executive Board for its support to the CCF. The framework was built on 25 years of experience. The period of the fourth country programme had been a time of transition, from the project to the programme approach and in a reduction of long-term experts, increased national execution and greater involvement of non-governmental organizations. In order to understand the context in which the CCF was prepared, several events needed to be mentioned: the reform process in India since 1991, with its resultant high economic growth rates; the development policies of the new government; and the Ninth Five-Year Plan, which coincided

with the CCF. The framework drew on three major Government objectives: the overall Government strategy to generate growth with equity; universalization of social services by the year 2000; and the national policy towards democratic decentralization. Steps had been taken to improve programme management in the context of the first CCF. Those terms included better management and review, enhanced planning, and the prioritization of certain projects. The new programmes of the CCF dealt with more complex issues which required new and innovative thinking, finding new mechanisms for implementation and working in remote geographical areas. The Executive Board must thus give adequate time to the programme in order for it to implement its new programme directions.

268. The Executive Director of UNFPA expressed her appreciation for the work of the Resident Coordinator in India.

269. The Assistant Administrator supported the proposal to include socio-economic indicators in CCFs. With regard to staffing, he explained that the inclusion of a staffing table might not be feasible, as the situation changed during the time period, with core posts prescribed in the budget strategy and more transient posts funded through extrabudgetary resources.

270. The Resident Representative noted that the Government had requested the ten programmes WHICH ARE included in the CCF as they were in support of national programmes. It was hoped that additional resources could be raised through third-party cost-sharing. Technical inputs from specialized agencies would be required in relation to national execution. Specialized agencies were involved in all of the programmes in the CCF. References in paragraphs 16 to 18 in the document in particular highlighted the areas in which specialized agencies were involved, in food security, primary education and in health support programmes. Specialized agencies were involved in the sectoral inter-agency groups as well. Linkages with bilateral programmes would continue to be identified. He assured delegations that there was a firm connection between inter-agency collaboration in India and the CCF and UNFPA country programme. There had been numerous lessons learned, which the document only outlined. Resource allocations to the individual programmes had not yet been finalized pending further consultations. Constraints on delivery were attributable to a number of causes and were being addressed. The Resident Representative acknowledged the support of the delegation which had referred to the UNDP role in the International Development Forum and noted that the human development profile was being prepared for the June meeting of the Forum.

271. The Executive Board approved the first country cooperation framework for India (DF/CCF/IND/1).

UNFPA: Proposed country programme for Eritrea

272. The Director of the Africa Division opened the discussion on the proposed programme for Eritrea by thanking the Government for its cooperation during the PRSD exercise in developing the Fund's first comprehensive programme for the country. The UNFPA Representative for Eritrea introduced the programme by explaining that the country's development priorities centred on overcoming the legacy of 30 years of warfare. That affected all United Nations programmes being carried out in Eritrea -- all of the development partners were new to the

country. Everyone was learning at the same time, which meant that sometimes things did not go as smoothly as they did in situations where there had been the opportunity to build up years of experience. There was, however, a truly collaborative process going on between the Government and all United Nations organizations, including UNFPA, and that made it a very rewarding country in which to work.

273. The proposed programme would have two major focuses: on outreach to women and adolescents and on helping the country develop a much-need demographic database. The country suffered from such a serious shortage of demographic information that no one was sure whether the total population was 2.5 million or 4.5 million. The fund would be working closely with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in helping to carry out the groundwork for a national census that was scheduled for 1998. In terms of support for reproductive health, UNFPA would concentrate its work in the two provinces bordering the Red Sea, along the entire length of the country. Other donors were concentrating their support in other parts of the country. One of the areas of concern in the area of reproductive health was the widespread practice of female genital mutilation (FGM). Because of the wide variance in cultural practices concerning that practice, the Fund felt that the best way to address it was to work through NGOs like the National Union of Women.

274. Several delegations commented that they were pleased with the proposed programme and welcomed the proposed UNFPA assistance for Eritrea. Several delegations also noted that their development assistance agencies had been involved in the PRSD exercise in Eritrea and thought that that was a very good development, indicative of the good cooperation that prevailed generally. Some thought, however, that the cooperation between UNDP and UNFPA could have been spelled out more explicitly in the respective papers. One delegation wondered about the low absorptive capacity of the Ministry of Health and how the programme would deal with that situation. Along the same lines, another delegation asked about the difficulties of carrying out national execution in such a young country. That delegation also wondered whether the family planning goals were not too ambitious given the context. One delegation wondered whether the great needs in the country would not require supplementary assistance in addition to the programmed $6.8 million that was being proposed.

275. One delegation asked about the role of NGOs in the country: Were they increasing in number? How strong were they? What was their relationship with the Government? Another delegation commented on a statement that the UNFPA Representative had made about the increase in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and asked how that was tied to the growth of prostitution, especially in port cities. The delegation therefore wondered whether thought had been given to coordinating activities with neighbouring Djibouti to help combat the spread of STDs. That might be an important avenue for IEC campaigns. Another delegation asked how the programme planned to address such questions as repatriation, urbanization, and the demographic effects of war. It noted that preparations for the census had started late. One delegation reminded the Board that the proposed programme, like all programmes, must be "country-driven" and it was the Eritrean Government's right and prerogative to implement it the way that it felt best. The same delegation felt that in the case of the country

programmes generally, and this one in particular, not enough scope was being given to possible areas of South-South cooperation.

276. The UNFPA Representative thanked the delegations for the large number of positive comments concerning the proposed programme. On the question of NGOs, she reported that strengthening the position of NGOs in the country had not been a priority of the Government although this was a subject of much discussion in government circles. There were only a limited number of NGOs in Eritrea, and those were all large national associations of functional groups such as the National Union of Women, the National Union of Youth and Students, and the National Union of Workers. UNFPA worked with all of them, but there were no international NGOs with operational activities in the country.

277. The Representative stated that it was true that the absorptive capacity of the Ministry of Health had been questionable in the past, mainly because of the lack of trained staff and its overall newness. However, the formulation of the country's primary health care policy in 1996 had led to many workshops and the consolidation of expertise within the Ministry. Therefore, she felt that capacity had been greatly improved and that the Ministry would be able to carry out its role in the proposed programme effectively. In that regard, she reported that 100 per cent of the programme would be nationally executed. This was something that the Government insisted upon, and UNFPA agreed with that approach. Even though national execution might take more time to get off the ground, in the end the benefits were clear, and there were beneficial synergistic effects that would be noticeable in other areas as well.

278. The UNFPA Representative said that it was true that census preparations had started late, but they were now well advanced and the cartographic work in preparation for the census was actually ahead of schedule. HIV/AIDS continued to be a great concern and the Fund was cooperating with the Government and other development partners in trying to do something about preventing its spread. The Government was in fact coordinating its efforts in the prevention of STDs with the Governments of both Djibouti and Ethiopia. As to the possibility that the goals in terms of family planning were overambitious, she reported that the current contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) of 4 per cent was indeed quite low; however, there was obviously much latent demand for modern contraception because the country had been faced with stock-outs of needed contraceptives twice during the past year. The Fund was cooperating, especially, with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to try to prevent recurrences of that situation and to make contraceptives more generally available, which should lead to an increase in the CPR.

279. The Executive Board approved the proposed UNFPA programme for Eritrea as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/183.

UNFPA: Proposed country programme for India

280. The Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific reported to the Executive Board that the UNFPA programme that was being proposed for India would be the Fund's largest. He thanked the Government of India for its support and said that the proposed programme had been developed in full consultation with the Government and other development partners. The UNFPA Representative for

India introduced the proposed programme by explaining that India was classified as a group "A" country under the Fund's new approach for resource allocation: Although the country had made great strides in a number of areas, there were still large discrepancies in levels of attainment in such a populous and diverse country. UNFPA was concentrating its efforts in 40 districts in 6 states in addition to continuing support at the central level, especially in terms of helping the country to improve its capacity for logistics management and quality assurance of contraceptive supplies. Social marketing of contraceptives was stagnating in India, and the Fund would provide help to reinvigorate that initiative.

281. The Representative stated that the proposed programme would work to strengthen collaboration with NGOs in India - 10 per cent of total programme funds had been reserved for NGO activities. The Fund was also very aware of the need to get performance indicators of the activities undertaken. The Representative concluded by stating that, as was generally known, India was undergoing a series of economic reforms that were resulting in great growth in the private sector. He felt, however, that it was very important to continue to support public sector needs as a way of reinforcing the country's social contract by helping the large numbers of people living below the poverty line who could not afford private services.

282. In commenting on the statement of the UNFPA Representative, several delegations mentioned that the kind of cooperation being carried out in India could serve as a model. One delegation noted the increasing role that the private sector was playing in the Indian economy and society and urged UNFPA to involve the private sector more in its programme. The same delegation also wondered whether the large Indian movie industry would be a good source of "Goodwill Ambassadors" for population activities in the country. Another delegation noted that the document on the proposed programme mentioned "infrastructure building" and wondered what role UNFPA would play in that and whether such a role was appropriate. The same delegation asked to what extent technical cooperation among developing countries (TCDC) would figure in the programme. Another delegation was pleased that the Fund was cooperating with UNICEF and WHO in the country and wondered what plans there were for working with other partners such as the European Commission and the World Bank.

283. In its comments on the proposed programme, one delegation questioned the lack of mention of male involvement in reproductive health activities and of treatment of reproductive tract infections (RTIs) at the primary health care level. In this regard, several delegations wondered how the rising rate of HIV infections in the country was being addressed. One delegation wanted to know more on how coordination with other donors would be carried out at the district level. The same delegation felt that some important elements of the Indian population situation, including migration, had not been addressed in the proposed programme. Several delegations agreed with the request made by one delegation that information on the staffing of the country office would be welcome. Another delegation stressed the valuable role that NGOs could play, including in South-South exchanges.

284. The representative of India expressed the appreciation of his Government for the proposed programme and the work that UNFPA was doing in the country. He

reported that the Government fully supported the goals of the ICPD and was, in the spirit of the ICPD, working to decentralize its reproductive health programme and to improve the quality of care that was being provided. In response to the suggestion that the private sector be more closely involved, he reported that private companies had played a large role in the Government's recent polio inoculation campaign for children and that perhaps that could serve as the model for activities in the area of reproductive health as well. In response to the question of one delegation, he said that the Fund would be providing support for improving the infrastructure support in some districts, but that the assistance would also be used for training and other activities so that the improved facilities could be utilized effectively. The Government of India was assuring that there was no overlap or duplication between the functions carried out by different development partners. In response to questions about the rising problem of HIV/AIDS in the country, he reported that the Government, with the assistance of the United Nations system under UNAIDS, was working to develop a coherent strategy for dealing with the problem.

285. The representative of India summarized what he thought were the strengths of the proposed UNFPA country programme for India - its focus on decentralization, the active involvement of NGOs, and the strong women's component. Operationalizing the programme would be a challenge, but its success was a high priority for the Government. He concluded by thanking the Executive Board for its support.

286. The Executive Director thanked the members of the Executive Board for the support they had expressed for the proposed programme and the Government of India for its strong commitment. She also expressed appreciation to the UNDP Resident Representative for the active role he had played in coordinating the efforts of all United Nations agencies in his role as Resident Coordinator. She informed the Board that the Fund would endeavour to include more information in future country programme presentations about the staffing of its country offices and on planned management of the programme. She said that the Fund had worked with the movie industry in India in the past and would continue to do so. The Fund also supported television soap operas that had a role in developing positive attitudes on the status of women and on girls' education. In the area of South-South cooperation, UNFPA had been using the expertise available in India for a number of years, including such institutions as the Indian Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS) in Mumbai. India was considering joining the Partners in Population and Development initiative, and the Fund was looking at possible Centres of Excellence in the country. Concerning male involvement, she said that the Fund would work to improve the situation, both in terms of information, education and communication (IEC) activities and in terms of the provision of services.

287. The Director of the Division for Asia and the Pacific pointed out that more and more collaboration between development partners was being undertaken at the time of the programme review and strategy development (PRSD) exercise. The Fund was consulting with other partners, especially the World Bank, on how to better coordinate HIV/AIDS programmes in the country. The Director reported that issues concerning migration and urbanization were being taken up under the population and development strategies programme area.

288. The UNFPA Representative for India said that there had been private sector involvement in the Fund's programmes in the past, in, for example, the tea-growing industry. UNFPA was working with chambers of commerce, large industrial groups and the railways to get them involved in programmes that reached out to employees. In commenting on the movie industry, he pointed out that there was a need inside the industry itself for greater efforts on raising the awareness of population, reproductive health and gender issues. As for male involvement, he stated that the Government's positive attitudes towards a more comprehensive reproductive health approach should help to increase the participation of men but there was, indeed, a lot of work to be done in that area, including working with NGOs. Combating RTIs would be carried out at the district level, and that was one area where volunteer community health workers were proving to be very helpful. UNAIDS had a programme in India, but combating HIV/AIDS, which was seriously underestimated in the country, was going to be a challenge for all United Nations agencies as well as the Government and other development partners.

289. The Executive Board approved the proposed UNFPA programme for India as contained in document DP/FPA/CP/193.

VII. OTHER MATTERS

290. One delegation, also on behalf of several others, requested that information on the percentage of core contributions to UNDP, UNFPA, UNIFEM and UNCDF, which were applicable to the 20:20 concept, be presented at the annual session 1997 or at the third regular session 1997.

291. Another delegation requested that an informal briefing on UNDP activities in relation to the International Year for Volunteers be held at the annual session 1997.

292. One delegation stated that a procedural decision on enhancing internal oversight mechanisms had been withdrawn. The speaker requested that the Administrator invite the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to present to the Executive Board at the annual session 1997, the report of the Secretary-General on OIOS and to provide comments on the applicability of the findings contained in the report to UNDP, UNDP-administered funds, and UNFPA.

293. Another delegation suggested that comments on UNDP country cooperation frameworks and UNFPA country programmes could be provided to their respective Secretariats in advance of Executive Board sessions in order for the responses to be provided at the session, thus leading to more strategic and focused discussion by the Board. Comments by programme countries on the adoption of the CCFs or country programmes for their own country could be made in advance of the adoption, so that others could react to their comments. Support was expressed for the proposal, which would enable a more interactive process and greater dialogue in the Board.

294. The President noted that programme countries had been active in responding to queries regarding their countries.

Further elaboration of follow-up to ECOSOC 1995/56:

295. The Director of the Emergency Response Division introduced a conference room paper (DP/1997/CRP.10), which, in responding to questions raised at the Executive Board's first regular session 1997, gave a description of the role of UNDP in humanitarian emergencies and provided views and suggestions on the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

296. Several delegations commended UNDP for the revised paper. The paper was an excellent description of current practice and how UNDP saw its roles and responsibilities in a system-wide context that required close inter-agency collaboration. The concrete examples included in the paper added to its effective presentation. Several speakers underlined that the paper should be considered as a "living document", in the context of ongoing discussions. Others emphasized the value of the consultative process that had resulted in the revised paper.

297. One speaker, on behalf of the African Group, praised UNDP for its work in Africa, particularly in Mozambique. UNDP had a leading role in coordinating assistance, for which the African group was thankful. The importance of transition to normalization was underlined. Another speaker thanked UNDP and donor assistance for work in his country.

298. Many delegations underlined the system-wide relevance of the issues covered in the paper, and noted that the upcoming Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) would finalize the recommendations and conclusions to give to the Economic and Social Council. One delegation, also on behalf of another, requested information on how the paper would serve as an input in the inter-agency process.

299. Several delegations emphasized that capacity-building was a niche of UNDP, which meant that the organization should develop a policy for capacity-building in countries that had faced emergencies and/or societal breakdown. It was noted that the paper referred to UNDP strengthening capacity in those areas, an effort that would require practical and analytical work which should be done in collaboration with other agencies in order to clarify the division of labour.

300. One speaker stated that the paper raised the point that development interventions in the initial stages of an emergency and development-friendly relief programmes were essential for longer-term sustainability and effective crisis response. UNDP had a unique and important role to play at all stages of an emergency, but most particularly in the transition period between crisis response, post-emergency recovery and longer-term development. Collaboration with partners during emergencies, and with donors, was crucial to coordinated, mutually reinforcing and sustainable programmes.

301. With regard to coordination, it was noted that the paper made a good case for UNDP involvement from the early stages of an emergency, on occasion performing an early-warning function and having the structure in place to

respond before other organizations arrived. However, the original orientation of UNDP was not crisis response, and the focus of many UNDP staff was not normally crisis response. When the options for coordination would be examined at the Economic and Social Council, several factors would need to be balanced, including the need to avoid duplicating the existing resident coordinator function, to ensure close consultation and cooperation with development agencies to ensure complementarity, and recognition that humanitarian assistance was a different function from development coordination. Further information was sought on the capacity of UNDP to fulfil the functions described in the paper and how it would prioritize those functions, in particular with regard to rehabilitation programmes for resettled internally displaced persons and returning refugees. It was suggested that a report be submitted to the Executive Board in 1998 on the use of the Memorandum of Understanding as a tool of coordination, with specific reference to tangible progress in coordinating with other United Nations partners.

302. The strategic framework received a number of comments. It was noted that the relationship among humanitarian strategies must be better clarified so that the United Nations system would avoid competition in favour of having a single consolidated strategy. The need for clear terms of reference on coordination in the field was underlined. The role of UNDP vis-à-vis the Department of Humanitarian Affairs needed more definition generally and specifically on the nature of UNDP interventions with regard to de-mining. Concerning funding, several speakers requested more information on the use of the target for resources assignments from the core (TRAC) line 1.1.3 and on the use of trust funds. A query was raised on whether the change process in UNDP would affect the use of line 1.1.3 and the functions of the present Emergency Response Division. One delegation requested that the Executive Board consider the follow-up to the guidelines for the use of line 1.1.3 at a future session.

303. Several delegations favoured the proposal of UNDP for an expanded consolidated inter-agency appeal process (CAP). One delegation noted that expanded CAPs could challenge the international community to find resources to match the expansion, and the importance of prioritizing projects within appeals for donors. The expanded CAP was identified as one that incorporated rehabilitation, recovery and other development needs, until other medium- and long-term resource mobilization mechanisms such as round-table and Consultative Groups meetings could be organized.

304. Information on the role of the resident coordinator in humanitarian activities and on performance measurement was sought. One speaker emphasized the need for certain personal qualities in resident coordinators, such as energy, competence and relevant previous experience, noting that candidates could come from any organization.

305. Several delegations requested further information on the role of UNDP and the involvement of the United Nations system in de-mining, in particular on the use of resources. One speaker queried whether UNDP de-mining activities were coordinated with the Department of Humanitarian Affairs Emergency Demining Trust Fund and whether there were de-mining activities in Rwanda. Another delegation noted the convening of a conference in early March 1997 on anti-personnel land mines and the related problems in the reconstruction of post-conflict countries.

306. Several speakers underlined the importance of formulating policies that combined relief with development and for clear definitions of those policies. One delegation sought the views of UNDP on the monitoring of policy objectives.

307. The Director of the Emergency Response Division stated that his office would continue a close dialogue with the Executive Board on the contents of the paper as well as on the results of the Economic and Social Council substantive session for 1997. He noted the lessons learned by UNDP in several countries in recent years. The Board had empowered UNDP in the area of capacity-building, an area where UNDP would continue to monitor its progress and adapt to present and future development challenges in bridging relief and development. There would be further discussion of TRAC line 1.1.3. The Emergency Response Division was the focal point for the use of resources within that line. Strategic frameworks had been endorsed by IASC as well as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ). The Inter-Agency Working Group in Rome accepted the approach and the comprehensive overview of working groups as well as the expanded CAP and strategic frameworks. The IASC meeting on 17 March would clarify the emerging consensus. A recent output of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) Task Force on Peace, Conflict and Development Cooperation also cited the need for a strategic framework. He noted that the Emergency Response Division would continue to be part of the Office of United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS) in the proposals of change management. The roles of the various bodies in de-mining needed to be clarified.

308. The President informed the Executive Board that further consultations on the subject would be held prior to the Economic and Social Council substantive session for 1997.

309. The Executive Board took note of the revised conference room paper on the follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56 (DP/1997/CRP.10) and the comments made thereon.

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

310. The President informed the Executive Board that there would be a more in-depth discussion on UNIFEM at the annual session 1997.

311. The UNIFEM Director introduced the response to the recommendations of the external evaluation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1997/CRP.11). She noted that the response would be incorporated in the strategy and business plan, to be discussed at the annual session. Informal consultations would be held between the second regular and annual sessions.

312. Many delegations thanked the UNIFEM Director for her presentation and for the written response to the external evaluation. While most speakers welcomed the comments made in the response to the evaluation, some commented that it could have been more analytical and could have included some critical comments. One speaker requested information on how the response to the evaluation would be included in the discussion at the annual session.

313. Many speakers looked forward to the annual session, when the UNIFEM business plan would be presented, and hoped to receive a copy of the plan as early as possible. The plan would be a useful tool in assessing the effectiveness of the Fund's work and in identifying funding gaps. It would also help the Executive Board to understand the planning process in UNIFEM. There was a need to identify the comparative advantage of UNIFEM in relation to the Secretariat and inter governmental mechanisms which dealt with gender in development issues.

314. Several speakers underlined the key role that UNIFEM could play in disseminating best practices in promoting gender equality and facilitating the agreements reached at the Fourth World Conference on Women. One delegation welcomed in particular the initiatives mentioned in the conference room paper, such as financial support to women's groups, the opening of its knowledge fund to others, and reporting on the state of women. That delegation also supported the need for UNIFEM to balance advocacy, gender mainstreaming and direct implementation of projects. Reports on the resumption of renewed operational procedures and a separate information strategy for UNIFEM would be welcomed.

315. One delegation, in welcoming the response to the evaluation, hoped that the outcome of the exercise would increase options for women and opportunities for the political empowerment of women. It would be useful to analyse the experience gained that could be developed and disseminated to larger groups. The work of UNIFEM in the context of the mandates given to it by the General Assembly and the Fourth World Conference on Women would be considered at the annual session. Two speakers noted that the role of UNIFEM in assisting UNDP to increase its gender activities could be further examined, given the limited resources of UNDP targeted to the gender area.

316. Some delegations stated that UNIFEM should not have access to UNDP funds. One delegation noted the findings in the evaluation which warned against a "co-mingling" of funds. One delegation stated that more innovative methods of resource mobilization should be explored.

317. One speaker, on behalf of the African Group, underlined its appreciation for the efforts of UNIFEM to respond to the evaluation recommendations. The Group cited the critical role UNIFEM played in enabling women to have access to economic resources and to exert greater control over their lives. The Fund must prioritize its activities, given limited funding, and in particular stress poverty eradication.

318. The UNIFEM Director thanked the Executive Board for its comments. She noted that the response to the evaluation was based also on the Board's previous comments and the mandates given to UNIFEM at the Fourth World Conference on Women. She reiterated that UNIFEM had shifted its focus in recent years; the fund's focus was now on bringing about systemic change that will lead to women's economic and political empowerment. In order to be focused and effective, UNIFEM would concentrate on three thematic areas: strengthening women's economic capacity as entrepreneurs and producers; ensuring gender tolerance with the aim of increasing women's participation in decision-making processes; and promoting the realization of women's rights and the elimination of violence against women. UNIFEM would use five strategies to implement the empowerment agenda: building

the capacity and leadership of women's organizations and networks to enable them to take advantage of new opportunities; leverage political and financial support for women; forge new synergies and partnerships between women's organizations, governments, the UN and the private sector; undertake pilot projects to test innovative approaches to women's empowerment; and building a knowledge base by documenting and disseminating ways and means of empowering women. UNIFEM is working with other United Nations organizations especially at the country level, through its Regional Programme Advisers.

319. The Board took note of the response to the recommendations of the external evaluation (DP/1997/CRP.11) and the comments made thereon.

Reserve for Field Accommodation

320. The Administrator gave an oral progress report on the management and accountability actions that had been taken with respect to the Reserve for Field Accommodation (RFA). The in-depth review and investigation into activities of the RFA had been an ongoing process and had been before the Executive Board since July 1996. The Division for Audit and Management Review had completed its internal investigation and had issued its report. In view of the interest of the Executive Board in the matter and his commitment to transparency, he had agreed to make copies of the summary of the findings available to delegations on a strictly confidential basis for their own use through the Office of the Administrator. He was equally committed to ensuring that staff were accorded every fair opportunity to address any questions related to them. For that reason, details regarding acts or omissions of staff could not be disclosed at the present time. It was expected that with the several cases involved, the next phase of due process would require some weeks. Ten cases involving misconduct or performance were under way, and a further six cases were still under consideration. The previous Chief of Field Housing Section had been summarily dismissed.

321. The Administrator gave a short overview of the history of the RFA and the undertaking of construction projects in nine countries. Based on the DAMR findings to the present time, it appeared that UNDP had paid between $3 million and $6 million more than it should have paid for the construction of common premises and housing. The figures were an estimate pending the outcome of the review of payments and services to contractors and negotiations with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) partners.

322. He highlighted a number of lessons learned from the experience, which included the need for specialized knowledge and skills for certain positions, ensuring that roles and responsibilities were clearly understood by those exercising certification and approval authorities, ensuring that approved decisions were appropriately implemented, and improving the joint decision-making process with JCGP partners.

323. The Administrator reviewed the management actions that had been taken to prevent recurrences and which had been previously presented to the Board. In line with the Executive Board's recommendation of January 1997, a procedure had since been developed to dispose of the housing.

324. The Administrator assured the Executive Board that the investigation into the RFA had no linkage with the relationship of UNDP with the host countries where the construction had taken place. The findings and investigation related only to UNDP staff members involved and to the outside contractors who had taken part, raising no implications with regard to any public sector organizations of the host countries. The investigation did not have a bearing on the UNDP-assisted programmes in those countries.

325. Several delegations thanked the Administrator for the oral progress report. Many underlined the need for transparency and requested that they be kept closely informed regarding the RFA. Other speakers identified the need to address UNDP managerial structures and competence in relation to the situation. One delegation stated that it was a matter for the entire organization for which the responsibility rested with the Administrator.

326. In commenting on various aspects of the case, several queries were raised, including the need to know what had become of the overspent money, the role of the Office of Internal Oversight Services in the investigation, and the years covered by the incident and the percentage of total turnover of the RFA.

327. One speaker stated that the actions taken by UNDP to address the situation and to avoid future mismanagement were encouraging. There must be implementation of lessons learned and the roles and responsibilities of all involved staff must be clearly understood, in particular certifying staff, especially at the country level. In addition, monitoring should be insured, and decision-making should be carried out jointly with the JCGP partners. The organization should proceed judiciously with the implementation of controls, including oversight. The delegation hoped that UNDP would have success with the disposal of housing and that the sales should be beneficial to UNDP.

328. Another delegation expressed the view that the situation had gone on for a very long time and he underlined the view expressed by others, that there was a broader question of oversight involved. It was also noted that the Executive Board had recently examined the issues of control and oversight in relation to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in which the financial oversight of UNDP had been involved. That delegation requested information regarding the views and experiences regarding oversight performed by UNDP senior managers. He also requested information on when the move to common premises would commence, hoping that it would begin soon, given the legislation adopted by the General Assembly.

329. The Administrator thanked the Executive Board for its comments and responded to the queries raised. He noted that the Office of Internal Oversight Services was being kept fully informed on the situation and its services were being used in connection with the external phase of the investigation. He was not in a position at the current time to comment on any deliberate actions to deprive UNDP of funds since that question was the primary subject of the external investigation. A number of changes had been made in the UNDP accountability framework and additional ones were contemplated in the context of the change management process. The incident was unusual, perhaps unprecedented, in UNDP. The Administrator underlined the need for a full and fair investigation in which no category of staff was exempt from review. The matter

of where the money had gone was under investigation. However, UNDP was determined not to reach any premature conclusions.

330. The Administrator stated that the issues involved in the situation needed to be discussed openly. It needed a complete response in order to prevent future recurrences. As Administrator, he was ultimately responsible for anything that happened during his tenure. He assured the Executive Board that he and the Associate Administrator had pursued the matter rapidly and transparently as soon as information had been made available to them. The matter would continue to be pursued until all the aspects of the issue had been resolved and a thorough investigation had been completed. It was not within his authority to refer to penal consequences.

331. The Director of the Division for Audit and Management Review informed the Executive Board that the years covered by the investigation were 1988 to 1995. Prior to those years, activity in the Reserve had been minimal. With reference to the query about the range of $3 million to $6 million cited in the opening statement, he informed the Board that the cause for overpayment was the time lag in construction (e.g., delays of three to four years) in which the budget had been increased, duplicate payments made, and the performance of various contractors investigated. Negotiation with JCGP partners had also taken place over that period. The range of $3-6 million was wide, but that estimate was the most accurate that could be made at the present time. By the end of the investigation, there would be a more precise figure. The sum of $3 million to $6 million was approximately 12 per cent of construction costs in the Reserve, which totaled about $52 million. It was difficult to answer the question posed by one representative regarding the number of countries involved in the overpayment without prejudicing the outcome of the investigation. The Board would receive information on that issue when it got to the point where it would not cause future problems.

332. The Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Finance and Administration said detailed information on the history of the situation was available in previously issued documentation. Additional action had been taken on general oversight and control functions, including the creation of a new financial and policy control unit in the Division of Finance. The gap in the certifying process needed to be filled and training conducted to ensure that the people who were certifying officers understood their functions well. General oversight existed in both internal and external areas. The area of common premises involved both housing for UNDP and other organizations and common premises. It was decided that housing proposals would no longer be pursued. As explained at the first regular session 1997, UNDP would not use its resources again for that function.

333. The Associate Administrator informed the Executive Board that the freeze in building common premises was discussed at the JCGP General Meeting in November 1996. Further action would take place pending the appointment of more highly qualified technical units. The JCGP would meet next on 7 April and decide on the status of the freeze.

334. In response to a query, he stated that UNDP was pursuing joint premises in situations where it was not a question of direct acquisition of property. That

trend was continuing and would be taken stock of at the upcoming JCGP General Meeting. UNDP would proceed wherever opportunities arose, preferably through rental or premises provided by the Government. The issue of management oversight was part of the investigation and could not be commented on further.

335. The Assistant Administrator referred to the preference that Governments provide free premises or construct premises with their own resources. With regard to oversight, he wished to underscore that it was UNDP that had identified the problem and, on the basis of the information received, information had been made available to the United Nations Board of Auditors for further study and work, then turned over for review by the internal oversight mechanism.

336. The President informed the Executive Board that the Administrator would present a progress report at the annual session. The Bureau would also follow up on the issue. If crucial information became available, the Bureau would call for a briefing for delegations in New York or return to the matter at the annual session.

337. The Executive Board took note of the oral report of Administrator on the Reserve for Field Accommodation.

Report on the follow-up to Executive Board decision 97/1

338. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) presented an oral report to the Board on the follow-up to decision 97/1 in which the Board had endorsed the membership of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health (CCH), which was to take the place of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Committee on Health Policy (JCHP). Following the adoption of decision 97/1, the President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board had communicated that decision to his counterparts at the Executive Boards of UNICEF and WHO. The Boards of those two bodies had in turn endorsed the proposed new arrangements. The secretariats of the three organizations were discussing ways of accomplishing the transition from the former JCHP to the new CCH, given that the JCHP still had items for consideration on its agenda, and on the terms of reference of the new body. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) informed the Board that there was a potential problem in scheduling the first meeting of the CCH and that there seemed to be possible differences in the interpretations of the three organizations on the transition from the JCHP to the CCH. The Fund would apprise the Board of further developments at the annual session in May and would circulate the proposed terms of reference as soon as they were available.

339. The President informed the Board that the regional groups had been asked to propose a country from each region to nominate the UNFPA representatives to the new CCH. These countries would choose a representative and an alternate, who would then serve in their personal capacities. The regional groups had recommended Antigua and Barbuda, Netherlands, Russian Federation and Zambia. The Asia and Pacific group had not yet chosen a country and asked that it be allowed to forward its choice to the Bureau, to be endorsed in the name of the Board. The President then asked the Board to approve the choices.

340. One delegation stated that it was important to circulate the new terms of reference once available and that it might be wise to involve the World Bank in the discussions as well. Another delegation noted that for the JCHP, the practice had been for the Executive Boards of UNICEF and WHO to endorse the actual representatives, once the curricula vitae of those persons had been circulated, and not just the countries that would choose the representatives. The delegation understood that this was an exceptional situation given the time-frame of establishing the new body but wondered what the proposed dates of the first meeting of the CCH were and whether that would allow time for the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to confirm its choices at the annual session.

341. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) replied that the dates originally set for the last meeting of the JCHP would fall during the time of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board's annual session in May. The secretariat was currently trying to see if it would be possible to reschedule that meeting and to see if the first meeting of the CCH could be held immediately after. If the meeting were moved to a later date, then it would be possible to circulate information about the UNFPA representatives at the annual session and to seek the Board's endorsement. The Board then requested the President to communicate with the President and Chairman, respectively, of the Executive Boards of UNICEF and WHO to help facilitate the selection of more tenable dates. The Board approved the nominations of Antigua and Barbuda, Netherlands, Russian Federation and Zambia to choose representatives of the Executive Board on the new UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health and authorized the Bureau to approve a country from the Asia and Pacific region, with the nominations of all representatives and alternates to be confirmed at the annual session. The Board also approved that the President of the Executive Board should serve as an ex officio member of the CCH.

Proposed revision of UNFPA financial regulations

342. The Director of the Division for Finance, Personnel and Administration introduced a proposed revision to UNFPA financial regulations as contained in document DP/FPA/1997/6. A new regulation was required in order for the Fund to establish stockholdings of essential contraceptive products under the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme, as established by Executive Board decision 96/3. The Programme had been set up to provide essential buffer stocks of contraceptives to facilitate prompt response to urgent and emergency requests for contraceptives from developing countries. The ready availability of stocks was necessary to avert potential disruptions in contraceptive supplies and to avoid the costly use of air freight. Under current regulations, it was not possible to keep stocks at the required level.

343. During the discussion that followed, delegations welcomed the proposed revision as a way of making the Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme fully operational. Some delegations asked for updated information on the functioning of the Programme, and the Director informed them that to date the Fund had received requests from eight countries for contraceptives under the Programme, worth about $500,000. That should be put into the context of the Fund's total provision of contraceptives during a year, which varied from about $30 million to $50 million. She informed the Board that a fuller report on the Programme

would be forthcoming in the context of the Executive Director's Annual Report, which would be presented to the Board at the annual session in May.

344. The German delegation informed the Board that due to a law in its country, its approval was contingent upon approval by the Federal Auditors. It saw no problem with the proposed revision, but it had not yet received the formal ruling. Therefore, the proposed revision of the UNFPA Financial Regulations as contained in document DP/FPA/1997/6 was adopted with the stipulation that approval of the German delegation was subject to clearance by the Federal Court of Auditors.

97/7. Revision of UNFPA Financial Regulations

The Executive Board

Approves the inclusion of a new regulation 14.7 in the UNFPA Financial Regulations and Rules under Article XIV - "Internal Control":

"Regulation 14.7 In conformity with Executive Board decision 96/3, UNFPA may procure and hold stocks of essential contraceptive products in order to promptly respond to emergency requests for assistance. The inventory value of these stock holdings shall be shown in the accounts as an asset."

14 March 1997

97/10. Overview of decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its second regular session 1997

The Executive Board

Recalls that during the second regular session 1997 it:

ITEM 1: ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Approved the agenda and work plan for its second regular session 1997 (DP/1997/L.2/Rev.1) as amended;

Agreed to the following schedule of future sessions of the Executive Board in 1997 and 1998 subject to approval of the Committee of Conferences:

Annual session 1997	12-23 May 1997
Third regular session 1997	15-19 September 1997
First regular session 1998	19-23 January 1998
Second regular session 1998	20-24 April 1998
Annual session 1998	8-19 June 1998 (Geneva)
Third regular session 1998	14-18 September 1998

Agreed to the subjects to be discussed at the annual session 1997 of the Board, as listed in table 3 of the annex;

UNDP SEGMENT

ITEM 2: COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS

Adopted decision 97/9 of 14 March 1997 on guidelines for improving the implementation of regional cooperation programmes;

Approved the following regional cooperation frameworks taking into account the comments made thereon:

First regional cooperation framework for Africa (DP/RCF/RBA/1);

First regional cooperation framework for Asia and the Pacific (DP/RCF/RAP/1);

First regional cooperation framework for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (DP/RCF/REC/1);

Approved the following country cooperation frameworks:

I

First country cooperation framework for Eritrea (DP/CCF/ERI/1);

First country cooperation framework for Ethiopia (DP/CCF/ETH/1);

First country cooperation framework for Mauritania (DP/CCF/MAU/1);

First country cooperation framework for Namibia (DP/CCF/NAM/1);

First country cooperation framework for Uganda (DP/CCF/UGA/1);

II

First country cooperation framework for Bhutan (DP/CCF/BHU/1);

First country cooperation framework for India (DP/CCF/IND/1);

First country cooperation framework for Laos (DP/CCF/LAO/1);

First country cooperation framework for Mongolia (DP/CCF/MON/1);

First country cooperation framework for Papua New Guinea (DP/CCF/PNG/1);

III

First country cooperation framework for Croatia (DP/CCF/CRO/1);

First country cooperation framework for Romania (DP/CCF/ROM/1);

First country cooperation framework for Uzbekistan (DP/CCF/UZB/1);

First country cooperation framework for Latvia (DP/CCF/LAT/1);

First country cooperation framework for Poland (DP/CCF/POL/1);

IV

First country cooperation framework for Colombia (DP/CCF/COL/1);

First country cooperation framework for Panama (DP/CCF/PAN/1);

V

Took note of the extension of the following country programmes:

Extension of the fifth country programme for Haiti (DP/CP/HAI/5/EXTENSION I);

Extension of the sixth country programme for Kenya (DP/CP/KEN/6/EXTENSION I);

VI

Took note of the first cooperation framework for technical cooperation among developing countries (DP/CF/TCDC/1) with comments made thereon;

VII

Took note of the note by the Administrator on assistance to Afghanistan (DP/1997/7);

Took note of the format and timing for review of the new programming cycle (DP/1997/CRP.7);

Took note of the earmarkings for the target for resource assignment from the core for 1997-1999 (DP/1997/8);

Took note of the note on national execution (DP/1997/CRP.8) with the comments made thereon;

ITEM 3. UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

Adopted decision 97/8 of 14 March 1997 on United Nations Capital Development Fund;

ITEM 4. UNDP: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Took note of strategy outline for the budget 1998-1999 (DP/1997/CRP.9) with comments made thereon;

UNFPA SEGMENT

ITEM 5: UNFPA: COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS

I

Approved the assistance to the Government of Angola (DP/FPA/CP/173);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Burkina Faso (DP/FPA/CP/187);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Central African Republic (DP/FPA/CP/182);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Comoros (DP/FPA/CP/171);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Eritrea (DP/FPA/CP/183);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Gambia (DP/FPA/CP/178);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Guinea (DP/FPA/CP/181);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Namibia (DP/FPA/CP/175);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Nigeria (DP/FPA/CP/190);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Senegal (DP/FPA/CP/176);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Togo (DP/FPA/CP/172);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Uganda (DP/FPA/CP/177);

II

Approved the assistance to the Government of India (DP/FPA/CP/193);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic (DP/FPA/CP/174);

III

Approved the assistance to the English-speaking Caribbean countries (DP/FPA/CP/179);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Cuba (DP/FPA/CP/188);

Approved the assistance to the Government of the Dominican Republic (DP/FPA/CP/186);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Ecuador (DP/FPA/CP/192);

Approved the assistance to the Government of El Salvador (DP/FPA/CP/189);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Haiti (DP/FPA/CP/191);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Peru (DP/FPA/CP/185);

IV

Approved the assistance to the Government of Lebanon (DP/FPA/CP/184);

Approved the assistance to the Government of Sudan (DP/FPA/CP/194);

V

Approved the assistance to the Government of Albania (DP/FPA/CP/180;

ITEM 6: OTHER MATTERS

Took note of the report on follow-up to the Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56 (DP/1997/CRP.10);

Took note of the response to the recommendations of the external evaluation of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (DP/1997/CRP.11) with the comments made thereon;

Took note of the oral report on the Reserve for Field Accommodation;

Took note of the oral report on the accountability system of UNDP;

Took note of the oral report on follow-up to Executive Board decision 97/1: UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health;

Approved the nominations of Antigua and Barbuda, Netherlands, Russian Federation and Zambia to represent the Executive Board on the new UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health and authorized the Bureau to approve a nomination from the Asia and Pacific region, with the nominations of all representatives and alternates to be confirmed at the annual session; also approved that the President of the Executive Board serve as ex officio member of the Committee.

Adopted decision 97/7 of 14 March 1997 on the revision of UNFPA Financial Regulations.

14 March 1997

ANNEX

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF UNDP/UNFPA TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR 1997

Table 1. First regular session 1997 (13-17 January 1997)
(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.1)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the third regular session 1996
	Official	I	1/2 day	Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 1996
	CRP	I		Matters relating to the rules of procedure, documentation and functioning of the Executive Board
	CRP	A		Annual work plan 1997 for UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board
				UNFPA SEGMENT
2				COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1 day	Country programmes
3				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I	1/2 day	Audit reports
4	Official	A	1/2 day	COORDINATION IN HEALTH POLICY AND PROGRAMMING
				UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
5				HARMONIZATION OF PRESENTATION OF BUDGETS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Harmonization of presentation of budgets and accounts

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
				UNDP SEGMENT
6				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	1/2 day	Country cooperation frameworks and global/regional cooperation frameworks
7				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	I		Audit reports
	CRP	I		Implementation of decision 96/40 on management, accountability and reserve for field accommodation
	CRP	I	1/2 day	Additional information on cost segments at UNDP headquarters
	Oral	I		Report on the accountability system of UNDP
8				UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
	CRP	I	1/2 day	Follow-up to decision 96/43
9				OTHER MATTERS
	CRP	I	1/4 day	Follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 95/56

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; and I = information.

Table 2. Second regular session 1997 (10-14 March 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.2)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A		Report on the first regular session 1997
				UNDP SEGMENT
2			1½ days	COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A		Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
	CRP	A		Format and timing for review of the new programming arrangements (96/7)
	Official	I		Earmarkings for the target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) for 1997-1999
	CRP	I	½ day	National execution
3				UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
	Official	A	½ day	United Nations Capital Development Fund (including strategy and business plans)
4				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	CRP	A	½ day	Outline of overall strategy for the budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (96/41, para. 4)
	Oral	I		Report on the accountability system of UNDP

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
				UNFPA SEGMENT
6	Official	A		COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
7				OTHER MATTERS including:
	Oral	I		- Report on Reserve for Field Accommodation
	CRP	I	2 days	- Revised report on follow-up to ECOSOC resolution 95/56
	CRP	I		- Response to the recommendations of the external evaluation of UNIFEM
	Official	A		- Proposed revision of UNFPA Financial Regulations
	Oral	I		- Report on the UNICEF/WHO/UNFPA Coordinating Committee on Health

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; and I = information.

Note: Informal consultations on UNDP Change Management held during the session.

Table 3. Annual session 1997 (12-23 May 1997)
(10 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.3)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents/work plan
	Official	A		Report on the first and second regular sessions 1997
	Official	A		Rules of procedure: report of ad hoc open-ended working group
				UNFPA SEGMENT
2	Official			REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1996
		I	1½ days	- Programme priorities
		I		- Statistical overview
		I		- Regional overview
3	Official	I	½ day	- Evaluation activities
4	Official	A	½ day	WORK PLAN FOR 1998-2001
5	Official	A	1 day	PROGRAMMING PROCESS
6	Official	A	½ day	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
				UNDP/UNFPA SEGMENT
7	Official	I		Reports of UNDP and UNFPA to the Economic and Social Council
2 & 8	Official	I	½ day	Reports of UNDP and UNFPA on internal oversight
				UNDP SEGMENT
8				ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR
	Official	A		Introduction by the Administrator
	Official	A		Main programme record, including reporting on special funds (7 parts)
	Official	I		United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
	Official	I		Assistance to the Palestinian people
	Official	I	2½ days[a]	Evaluation
	Official + CRP	A		Change management
	Official	I		Report of the Joint Inspection Unit
	Official	I		Statistical annex
	CRP	I		Resources
9				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
10				COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION PROGRAMME
	Official	I	½ day	UNDP information and publication policy (96/22)
11				UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
	Official	A	½ day	United Nations Development Fund for Women (95/18)
12				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	CRP	I	1 day	Report on the accountability system of UNDP
13				UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES
	Official	A		Report on the United Nations Office for Project Services (96/33)
14			½ day	OTHER MATTERS

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and ICPD = International Conference on Population and Development.

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[a] Timing includes one day special event on poverty eradication to be held on Tuesday, 20 May 1997.

Table 4. Third regular session 1997 (15-23 September 1997)

(5 working days)

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
1				ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS
	Official (DP/1997/L.4)	A		Provisional agenda, annotations, list of documents
	Official	A	½ day	Report on the annual session 1997
	CRP	I		Outline for Executive Board work plan 1998
				UNDP SEGMENT
2				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A		Budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999 - 96/41, para. 4 - (including detailed costs of publication and of their distribution - 96/22)
	Official	A	1½ days	Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997
	Official	I		Annual review of the financial situation 1996
	Official	I		Activities of Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office
	Official	I		Subcontracts awarded and major equipment ordered
3				UNOPS: FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A		Budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999
	Official	A	½ day	Revised budget estimates for the biennium 1996-1997
	Official	I		Audit reports

Item No.	Nature of report	Action/ Information	Time Allotted	Item and subject
4				COUNTRY COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS AND RELATED MATTERS
	Official	A	½ day	Country cooperation frameworks and regional cooperation frameworks
		A		Revised global cooperation framework (97/5)
				UNFPA SEGMENT
6				FINANCIAL, BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
	Official	A		Biennial budget estimates
	Official	A		Annual financial review, 1996
	Official	I	1½ days	Implementation and monitoring of technical support services arrangements
	Official	I		Evaluation of UNFPA training activities
7	Official	A	½ day	COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND RELATED MATTERS
8				OTHER MATTERS

Abbreviations: A = action; CRP = conference room paper; I = information; and UNOPS = United Nations Office for Project Services.

Note: Review of field visits will be taken up in informal consultations during the session.